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# PRE-ROMAN BRITAIN

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## PREFACE

A BOOK so small as this cannot lay claim to being more than a very brief outline of such observations as I take to be essential to the task of presenting a coherent story of pre Roman Britain. The material is principally concerned with England, partly because it is better known to me than that of Ireland, Scotland, or Wales, and partly because (excluding New Grange) the most important centres of pre Roman settlement were in England.

H J M

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# PRE-ROMAN BRITAIN

## CHAPTER I

### *THE COMING OF THE PIONEERS*

THOUGH Downland is being desecrated by the speculative builder with more Philistine hardihood every year, it still remains the most solitary type of English country south of the Midlands. Yet a millennium and a half before the Romans made their military roads, straightening out the ancient trackways they found here so unbendingly that it has taken Nature centuries of toil to soften their rigidity of cold command, the Downs were the raised seat of the earliest civilization known to England, the civilization that we call megalithic, because its architecture and, to a large extent, its religious beliefs, attached particular importance to great blocks of stone. The term "megalithic" fits this archaic Downland culture so much more significantly than the old-fashioned ones of "Neolithic" and "Bronze Age," which confusingly indicate only a change of the material used for some implements between the first and second periods of the megalithic era, that we shall adhere to this single label throughout. Though sharp distinctions are usually drawn between these two periods, there is no strong evidence to corroborate them. The "Bronze Age" in its earlier phase was merely a more extensive if less imposing development of the "Neolithic Age," even though the peoples responsible for each culture may not have come from the same country and were racially distinct. Culturally, they were unques

tionably akin, revealing much the same interests and pursuits, settling in similar regions, building monuments of earth and stone whose likenesses are much more salient than their differences. In community of ideas, in the dual impression they stamped upon England, the men of the long and the round barrows virtually represent successive phases of a single civilization, whose homeland was once the English Downs.

That this is so is unfolded by glancing at a map of megalithic England. It will be obvious that the main settlements (barrows, stone circles, 'dolmens,' earth works, and other remains) of the interior were the chalk uplands of Wiltshire, Dorset, Sussex, Kent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Yorkshire, of which the Wiltshire Downs, travelling westward from Salisbury in the south and Marlborough in the north, were the pivotal region. That the Wiltshire plateau was the most consequential centre of occupation will occur to the map reader for three reasons. It was the centre of an elaborate trackway system which linked Cornwall with the Wash, Beachy Head with the Welsh coastline, and leaves no region of occupation from Yorkshire to the Isle of Wight entirely isolated. The Wolds of Yorkshire, for instance, threw out green threads of communication with the Peak District, the latter with the Cotswolds, the Cotswolds with the Mendip range, Mendip with the Wiltshire Downs. Secondly, the most massive and ambitious monuments—Avebury and Stonehenge—were erected upon the Wiltshire plateau, while, thirdly, the megalithic environment of Avebury, the largest stone circle in the world, was more congested with architectural remains of the megalithic period than any other area of England, Scotland, or Wales. Geologically speaking, the most important regions of England to the megalithic peoples, other than the chalk, were those of granite and limestone, in which the Cornish and

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Devon moors, the Peak and Mendip ranges, the Cheviots, the Lake District, and large tracts of Wales are comprehended

It is usually assumed that our megalithic pioneers dwelt upon this hilly country for the twin purposes of avoiding the forested lowlands and swamps and of securing good pasturage for their crops. And these factors must have played their due part in determining territorial settlement. To conclude that they were sufficing motives, or even other than secondary ones, is inadmissible for several convincing reasons. If megalithic man had to that extent been the pawn of his geographical surroundings, it is doubtful whether he could ever have reached England at all in the frail craft at his then disposal. He must, on the contrary, have been an explorer of the doughtiest mettle, and so one very unlikely to have accepted with docility the terms dictated to him by Nature. He came to wrest her riches and dominions from her at the storm-gates of the Western World, not to yield to her stern sovereignty there.

Nor can this theory make clear to us how men, dominated by their sheep and their oxen, fearful of venturing into the wilderness of trees below them, came to leave such numerous and laborious monuments and witnesses of endeavour as the earthworks, barrows, stone circles, trackways, dolmens, flint-quarries, and terraces of the megalithic period. The thought that raised them was so peculiar, the toil they demanded so vast, that their minds must have harboured more complex ambitions, as they found more highly organized methods of gratifying them, than ever visit the thoughts of shepherd and cowherd.

We have, besides, certain evidences from other quarters of the ancient world that pastoral nomads had lost the capacity for architecture in stone or intimate touch with its particular conventions. Such architecture implies stability of residence, and your



flockmaster is not one who travels with blocks of stone in his scrip. We have, again, to face the unfathomable riddle of why, if the men of the long and the round barrows were in the main seekers after pasturage, they chose to pile their megaliths and earth-towns upon one bleak moor, one blasted heath, one inhospitable barren after another from Dartmoor to the Pennines. It is evident that the megalith-builders were upland-dwellers not for refuge but by design, and that they picked and chose their geological surfaces with an eye to some meaning in them which was purposive.

That preference manifested itself more vehemently on the chalk Downs than anywhere else in the interior of England. It does not help us greatly to be told that the choice of the Downs for residence, for the development of the flint industry (as at Cissbury in Sussex and on Windmill Hill near Avebury), for a very individual if clumsy agricultural system which we shall discuss in a later chapter, for the earthworks billowed in ramparts ranging from 50 to 80 and occasionally even 100 ft. in height, for open temples in stone, for long, round, and conical tombs with or without chambered passages within the mound and for the massive stone-tables known as dolmens, the majority of which are almost certainly the central chambers of what were once normal long barrows, was a mere convenience for settlers who mainly clung, like vegetation round a pond, to the coastline.

A bird's-eye view of the megalithic settlements in Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and from the North to the Black Sea does indeed reveal their remains as a kind of stranded debris of a spring sea tide. But though the Downs both of Sussex and of Dorset must have been a welcome refuge for seafarers, feeling for calm waters and secure landing round our dangerous coast, the extent and importance of the Downland monu-

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ments too far outrange and outweigh those of a granite or limestone littoral for the migrants to have been thinking only of perches. Altogether the Downs were to them what a library is to a university, the reservoir of its multifarious energies. They established a Downland civilization here, and from the peculiar attention they paid to style and a commanding visibility in the monuments they erected, we may surmise that these two megalithic peoples, with their thoughts half in death as in life and obsessed with religion in both, venerated the hills as clothed in divinity. The uplands to them were much more than a leap-up from the damp and glooms and bewilderments of the valleys, they were halfway houses to heaven.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STONE TEMPLE

#### I—AVEBURY

It is not too much to claim of Avebury, situated on the Marlborough Downs, that it represents the hugest megalithic monument surviving in the world to-day. Carnac in Brittany has resisted the vandal more successfully, Ponape in the Carolines is a greater work of engineering, the stone terraces of the Andes witness an even heavier toil, the shaft graves of Mycenæ are the work of a more refined culture. But Avebury as it once was, is, in comparison with other stone circles of the world, *facile princeps*. When the famous antiquary, Aubrey, saw it with Charles II, it was far more worthy of its ancient splendour than it has been since the farmers of the village it still environs sweated to demolish its stones for their walls and cottages and byres. Fifteen stone monoliths, however towering and

massive, are indeed an emaciated relic of a temple whose detached blocks must once have numbered five hundred—a hundred for the outer circle, thirty for the northern circle, twelve for its inner circle, thirty each for the two southern circles, one for the central obelisk within the first, three for the “Cove” within the second, one for the ring stone between these circles, two hundred for the processional avenue leading towards Overton Hill, forty for the outer circle upon Hackpen Hill, eighteen for its inner circle, and three for the “Devil’s Quoits” at Beckhampton. Including the circles on Overton Hill with the general structure, Avebury once boasted half a thousand stone Presences that must have taken the labour of at least a hundred men to move every single one of the greatest

These figures as to both the extent and the formal intricacy of this vast open air cathedral can dispense with further comment. Surely they tell an epical story of the builders of Avebury themselves.

The impression of greatness is reinforced by the remains that once clustered round Avebury like the small progeny of some enormous mammal. Nearly all the chambered long barrows of the Wiltshire Downs were in the neighbourhood of Avebury, and on West Kennet Hill, a mile or so away, rests what was once the most imposing long barrow in England. Between the temple and the long barrow is the vast conical mount of Silbury, which, if it is not a pyramid in religious intent, is certainly one in size, appearance, and repute. Four other stone circles, only one of which survives in a demolished condition, were further satellites to the great temple. The same number of dolmens, which were much more elaborately constructed than what remains of them now suggests, made a still more thronged Olympus of deified stone heroes upon the Avebury plateau. For what are unwieldy blocks of stone to us, shapeless and meaningless, certainly bore a significance to the men

of Avebury, the fulness of which can only be revealed by a study, in the first place, of ritualistic architecture in stone among the antique nations of the Mediterranean, and, in the second, of the innumerable legends and superstitions of stones animated by the dead which have come down to us. There can be no reasonable doubt that these ponderous obelisks of the Mediterranean civilization were either a silent witness to the powers of the living dead or actually their dwelling places.

The Avebury plateau was also studded with residential and industrial works in earth. It was within a few yards of Avebury that the Great Ridgeway united its south and west branches. Six earthworks, built in that lofty and flowing style which in itself is evidence of a more complex culture than was brought into England by the Celts of the later "Bronze Age," combined with fourteen long barrows, some with vanished dolmens on their crests and ceremonious fences of detached stone blocks, to underline still more sharply the importance of Avebury.

## II — STONE CIRCLES

➤ We can only approach the meaning of the stone circle partly by a study of antiquarian records abroad, partly by the tortuous path of folk lore. By these means we can be fairly confident that the stone circle represented, on the one hand, a place of assembly for deliberating the affairs of the community, probably through a council of a pretty strict oligarchical constitution, and partly a temple for worship in which the cult of the dead was associated with various ritual observances of the heavenly bodies. The solar traditions of Stonehenge, for instance, have survived all archæological scepticism, and it is almost as well established that Stonehenge itself, though a more finished structure than Avebury, must have been set

up by a people somewhat later in date than the men of the long barrows, but with very strong cultural affinities to them

There are many other stone circles elsewhere in Britain, more especially in chalk, granite, and lime stone areas, and a study of their distribution, together with that of other works in stone or earth grouped about them, leaves no doubt that neither their purpose nor their position was casual. They represented a nucleus of concentration wherever they appeared, and were so organically interlinked with the trackway system that they obviously served as nodal points of self-contained and organized communities which were in touch with one another, and at the same time were setting up their half secular, half-religious, and wholly ritualistic centres with that purposiveness which all the works of megalithic man reveal.

Allcroft, in *Earthwork of England* has said of Avebury that it represented 'an organized effort on a vast scale,' and implied "a considerable population living in a settled condition of peace, united in the observance of a widely recognized cult, and accustoming to combine for common action under the direction of some recognized authority." This is a rational generalization from the signs and clues that the might of Avebury has left behind in its now fallen day. The interlinkages we have touched upon could not have been built up by a people subjected to the embarrassments and forced mobility of tribal warfare. The presence of Silbury, a pointed hill for a tomb, is witness to a kingship or high authority with autocratic powers. The profusion of long and round barrows, sometimes with specially constructed stone chambers and cists, scattered over such wide areas of Britain, is a record, written on the surface of the land, of a nobility to whom divine or at least exalted honours were paid. The magnitude of the operations involved in the construction of such impressive tombs and

temples, together with the poverty of engineering devices to aid them, gives us the 'considerable population' And the peculiar alignments and disposition of stone circles, stone avenues, and long barrows constantly remind us of an association in the minds of this people between the dead pressed down by the weight of their monuments and the heavens above them Lastly, the similarity of these monuments in all parts of the country point to a common obedience to a religion sown with magical, ritualistic, and astronomical formulæ (in which sun worship may or may not have played a predominant part) and a common knowledge of the ceremonies attached to it

We should, therefore, expect to find the shadow of Avebury extended very far beyond its own circumference, so that all men grew chill or comforted within its protective arm An excellent example is the stone circle of Arbor Lowe on the Derbyshire limestone, which is not only practically a facsimile or duodecimo edition of Avebury, but carries out the same ground-plan in its relation to the conical mound of Gib Hill Barrow and the earthen embankment between them as Avebury bears to Silbury and the stone avenue leading towards the Kennet River In another limestone area, that of the Somerset Mendips, the "Cove" of three monoliths hard by the broadly spreading stone circles of Stanton Drew, harnesses the mind both to the "Cove" at Arbor Lowe and the two of them at Avebury, one within the circles and one at Beckhampton The architectural plan of Stanton Drew also resembles that of Avebury, so that Borlase (*Nenia Cornubiæ*) is not writing *in vacuo* when he remarks "Wherever circles of stone are to be found it seems clear that they owe their origin to the same design which attained its perfection in Abury, and finally in Stonehenge"

As a reinforcement of the evidences of organized intercommunication between the great "capital" of

Avebury (if so it may be called) and other areas of megalithic concentration, we may mention in passing a few of the industrial products found in the Wiltshire barrows and brought from distant parts. These barrows contain amber from the East Coast, jet from Yorkshire (probably from the Whitby settlement, with its stone circle) and shale from the Kimmeridge district of the Dorset Downs, which were extensively occupied by both the colonial waves of the megalithic peoples. Shale ornaments also appear in the Derbyshire barrows, a bronze dagger handle from a Yorkshire mound is a replica of another found near Stonehenge, and a pair of Derbyshire and Wiltshire "Beakers" tell the same tale.

Thus we are not on hazardous ground in presuming the conclusion that Avebury, at once the largest and, so far as the evidence goes, one of the very earliest stone circles of Britain, was the main seat of our megalithic civilization. The other stone circles of Britain, whether on the windswept Orkneys, the bleak wastes of Cornwall, Derbyshire, and North Wales, or among the smooth and perfect lines of the Downs, can only be called finger rings beside the ancient crown of Avebury.

It has long been a matter of debate as to whether the megalithic peoples who pushed westward to our shores, possibly from Brittany, but more probably from Spain (I am speaking here of the first comers), were living in a state of barbarism from which the rudiments of civilized institutions were beginning to emerge, or whether their architecture, social organization, and religious beliefs decipher a westward extension of Mediterranean culture much more highly advanced than the British grafting of it. Up to the third quarter of last century the latter school of opinion was, on the whole, the more dominant, though the data at its command for tracing the origins of our megalithic culture to the East were necessarily

very inadequate. Since that time, the former mental attitude has held sway, basing its conclusions from the very doubtfully legitimate application of biological formulæ to the cultural history of mankind. The independent development of civilized from savage conditions impregnated with "animistic" fantasies is supposed to have taken place in different parts of the world.

The reader must form his own judgment. He has to decide whether the status of culture represented by Avebury and Stonehenge, the one probably belonging to the first megalithic phase, the other to the opening of the second, does betray an advance out of savagery towards a more cohesive society. Or he must ask himself whether the cultural evidences are so numerous and complex as to forbid the idea that they can be interpreted in any other way except as revealing the offshoot in a degenerate or less polished and refined form of a highly finished civilization prospecting in foreign lands for certain sources of wealth which were valued for specific reasons. Certainly the school of spontaneous development has very formidable obstacles to dispose of. There is, for instance, no evidence for any apprenticeship in the stone building of early Britain, while the majesty of Avebury sprang up like a palace in a fairy story without any graduated experiments to precede it. The same school has, too, to reckon not only with the discovery of certain cultural objects in Britain whose origins point to the Eastern Mediterranean, but with certain structural affinities in tomb-types which are signposts along the same road.

If, again, Avebury did not owe its inspiration to foreign models, we should expect what we do not find—namely, a progressive development of architecture both in skill and in grandeur during the second phase. Nor can we translate these megalithic hieroglyphs intelligibly by assuming that the lesser stone circles outside Wiltshire were rough drafts of the culminat-



ing achievements of Avebury and Stonehenge. It is probable, indeed, that but for the supremacy of certain rather casual ideas of Edward Tylor, the patriarch of anthropology in the seventies of last century, as to the similarity of independently evolved cultures, the megalithic civilization of England would not have been regarded as the product of a barbarous society at all. Authorities like J. R. Mortimer and Boyd Dawkins had no doubt that the "Iberians" (the long-headed Mediterranean race with dark skins, lithe and wiry bodies, and short stature, who were the first megalithic settlers in England) cultivated cereals, kept domesticated animals, and were familiar with the arts of spinning and weaving, mining and pottery making. Mortimer, besides, draws attention to the complex organization represented by the works of megalithic man in the Yorkshire Wolds. Without expressly committing ourselves to either camp, it is difficult to attribute such capacities to a savage community uncertainly fumbling after the early conquests of an organized culture by strife and the consequent elimination of the weaker communities.

### III —STONEHENGE

A word as to Stonehenge, the tumbled ruin lying on what was once the vast manless Plain, or rather plateau, of Salisbury, "a sea of carpet," as Evelyn called it, "as I think for evenness, extent, verdure, and innumerable flocks to be one of the most delightful prospects of Nature." Nobody could say that when confronted with the barrack dumps that now defile the Plain, and these uncongenial neighbours have dwarfed the grandeur of Stonehenge. It is a more formal, correct, and geometrical structure than Avebury, but even with the Plain to itself it would lack the majesty of its Iberian predecessor on the Marlborough Downs. Archaeological opinion, usually at sixes and sevens, on

the whole inclines fairly strongly to the verdict that it was built in the first dawn, the early streaks, of the "Bronze Age" and other indications, to be mentioned later, point to a date somewhere around 1300 B.C. A trace of bronze was found in the excavations, but not with such certainty as to dispose of the doubt whether bronze tools were employed in the building. The quarrying picks were still tine and antler of the red deer, as they were in the construction of the older megaliths, and the axes and hammers of stone were indistinguishable from those manufactured in the "Neolithic" period. Flint was, indeed, so constantly in use during the "Bronze Age" and even subsequently that the term "Neolithic" to describe a particular epoch is open to severe objection on this ground alone.

The remarkable thing about Stonehenge is the service of such primitive tools upon a structure, the "Trilithons" of whose circles—tall "sarsen" slabs with their imposts riveted upon their crowns with tenon and mortise—were so carefully dressed, and the disposition of whose monoliths was so elaborate. The outer circle of Trilithons, the wheel of smaller "blue stones" within this outer circumference, the double crescent of "blue stones" and Trilithons of graduated height behind them, and in the centre the recumbent slab at right angles to the north-east, upon which axis the sun, resting its rays upon the isolated monolith known as the "Friar's Hele," a hundred feet or so outside the circles, strikes at the Summer Solstice—this Hall of Astronomical Science in no way suggests the work of woad smeared savage tribes. Its systematized austerity directs the mind rather to the thought of a people who came to our shores with certain religious and architectural ideas firmly planted in their heads. It suggests a people familiar—they or their forbears—with grander models of which Stonehenge itself, owing to the distance of the English Downs from their home-

lands and the inadequacy of the stone tools alone available for it, was the lesser imitation

If, therefore, Stonehenge was raised in the 'Bronze Age,' where were the bronze or copper tools which would have so much lightened the labour of the construction? Some of these—the bronze dagger, for instance—were interred within the round barrows which a general consensus of view has gathered to be contemporary with this severe and highly mannered Temple of the Sun. But these bronze ornaments are not abundant enough to give the title "Bronze Age" its full weight, and it was not until the latter end of this same age (*circa* 1000 B.C.) that bronze *caches* appear in numbers. Was the greater quantity then of copper and tin, which make up bronze, exported, and if so, was the first megalithic era, whose resemblances to the second are so numerous, likewise acquainted with metals? These suggestions would go far to explain why so much trouble was taken with a sacred building by a people with such rudimentary implements at their command.

Another supporting fact of great interest is that the "blue stones" of the Temple were almost certainly fetched right away from the Prescelly Mountains in Pembrokeshire, a laborious carriage which is further witness to the intercommunications existing between one region and another of megalithic England, and to the settled and complex religious beliefs of its inhabitants. They were a people who spared no trouble worthily to express those beliefs. Stonehenge, again, bears a resemblance to a funerary monument (Sir Arthur Evans), and its design has been compared with the temple of Seti I in the nineteenth dynasty of dynastic Egypt, a date which dovetails with the thirteenth century B.C. as the suggested date of Stonehenge. Lastly, we may point out that not only is the stone circle reproduced in Palestine and many other quarters of the world, but that the specific form

of the Trilithon is a feature of the megalithic architecture of Polynesia. The postern to the Lion Gate of Mycenæ is a Trilithon, the island of Tongatabu shares this massive form of gateway with Salisbury Plain. Was the Trilithon independently evolved in all three areas? Or was it one of the distinguishing architectural customs of a widely prospecting people, who handed on their cultural ideas to other peoples and were themselves ultimately derived from a single centre of high civilization? Did they reproduce its architectural characteristics in tomb and temple in a colonial and ruder fashion?

One further point about Stonehenge. Though Avebury scattered plenty of Aveburiana in the shape of smaller stone circles similarly planned throughout Britain, Stonehenge was unique of its kind. This fact might well entitle us to regard Avebury as a primary and Stonehenge as a secondary settlement, quite apart from the great difference in the relative sizes of, in Aubrey's phrase, the "cathedral" and the parish church. But other cultural affinities between the first and second periods of the megalithic era in Britain are so numerous that the men who built Avebury and the men who built Stonehenge must have come into intimate contact and drawn from a common stock of ideas and conventions, modified to suit the individuality of each people.

## CHAPTER III

### *HOMES AND JOURNEYS*

#### I—THE GREEN ROADS

WE have already referred to the trackway system of the megalithic culture in England, but it needs a little more extensive treatment for the reader to grasp the

idea, first, of a grouping of settlements upon a systematic plan, and secondly, of an obviously co-ordinated network of communications between them. We might almost call the trackways a nervous system with its activities issuing from the head (Avebury), its nerve centres concentrated on the sites of the most important stone circles, and the nerves themselves maintaining channels of intercourse between circles, earthworks, barrows, and other types of megalithic remains on the one hand, and the chalk, granite, and limestone districts where they were congregated, on the other. The unity existing between this trio of geological areas by means of the trackways is in itself sufficient to denote that megalithic man must have settled upon them with some definite purpose in his mind, and we have already pointed out that this object could not have been solely or mainly pastoral.

Avebury was, as we have said, the node of the trackway pattern. It is connected by these sinuous greenways, starred with daisies, with the Wash, with the North and South Downs, with Salisbury Plain, with the Chilterns and the Cotswolds, with the Purbeck Range and the Dorset Downs and with the Mendip Range as far as the Bristol Channel. The main line of the Great Ridgeway links the Hampshire Highlands by way of Inkpen Beacon to Avebury before it passes south-west along the line of the chalk as far as the sea at the mouth of the Devonshire Axe. In its north-easterly journey from Avebury, it seeks the curving lines of least resistance under the summits of the solitary Berkshire Downs with their many earthworks and famous long barrow of Wayland Smith's Forge, crosses the Thames at Streatley, where it has now become the Icknield Way, winds along the Hertfordshire chalk beyond Hitchin and arrives via the Gog and Magog Hills in Cambridgeshire at the famous "Neolithic" flint quarries of Grime's Graves near Thetford, whence it throws off a tributary to the

Wash Along nearly the whole of its ambitious course it is studded with great earthworks

The chalk Downs of Winchester, again, slip out a feeler over the North Downs, south of them past Selborne, across the southern watershed and south once more to Butser Hill, where follow sixty miles of the South Downs, important to the megalithic men, as their long and round barrows, their earthworks, and shafted and honeycombed flint mines at Cissbury testify, as far as the sea at Beachy Head. The North Downs, again, are traversed by the famous Pilgrims' Way, known to the ancients so many centuries before the gossiping Canterbury pilgrims wiled their leisurely journeys along it, that it would have seemed to them but a step from Chaucer's day to our own. The Pilgrim's Way passes within a few paces of the Kentish dolmen known as Kit's Coty House, which a reproduction by the eighteenth-century antiquarian, Stukeley, has proved to be the east end of a long barrow stone chamber of the "false-passage grave type," with a dummy portal rather later than the true portals of the chambered long barrows. There were once eight long barrows in this area of the Pilgrim's Way which links Winchester with Canterbury by way of the Hog's Back, Dorking, Box Hill, the North Downs, the Medway Gap, Hollingbourne, and Charing. Mr Belloc has given cogent reasons for concluding that it was once connected by other tracks with Avebury, and all along its route excavation has revealed its associations with megalithic man of both periods.

Watling Street and Stane Street are other Roman roads believed by good authorities to have been superimposed upon the green ribbons of turf used by the barrow men. The arteries of South and North Wales tell the same story, and Wales itself kept in touch both with the Derbyshire limestone and the chalk Cotswolds (themselves linked with the Mendips) by means of

these same long green fingers Wales, again, stretched its antennæ to communion with Lancashire with its stone circles (Long Meg, etc.), Herefordshire and Shropshire with their earthworks and terraces, while Derbyshire spun out threads to the Yorkshire Wolds with their barrows, earthworks, and terraces. Men with packs passed between Yorkshire, Westmorland, and the Cheviots along similar green veins. When there was high festival at Avebury, surely the great circles were thronged by sightseers who had come many a weary mile, and to whom the Downs of North Wilts were as strange as the Tyrol is now to Londoners.

## II—THE GREAT EARTHWORKS

To leave the great oval earthworks with their fosses out of a survey of the ancient trackways is *Hamlet* and lines of ramparts, sometimes four in number, without the Prince of Denmark. The two systems are inseparable, and the earthworks betray the same geographical co-ordination as the trackways themselves. Three trunk lines travel westward from Avebury along the trackways, one over the Cotswolds, ultimately branching to the stone circles of Wales and Oxfordshire, one linking the Wiltshire Downs with the Mendips and the Bristol Channel, and the third a congested series of earthen citadels planted on the line of the Great Ridgeway, and passing over the North Dorset Downs and the Purbeck Hills into Devon and Cornwall. Mortimer has pointed out that the eighty miles of earthworks on the Yorkshire Wolds are "constructed on a preconceived plan of great magnitude" and represent "the most laborious work of a numerous and settled people ever undertaken and executed within their limits." Mr. Hippiusley Cox, in *The Green Roads of England* says of the Ridgeway that it "is guarded for the whole hundred and fifty miles of its course by a series of earthworks at every ten or twelve

miles interval " The North Sea, that is to say, was once joined to the westerly English Channel by a chain of earthworks

Many of the largest earthworks are concentrated in the key districts of the stone circles Avebury has many earthworks in its neighbourhood, there are stone circles in the neighbourhood of Maiden Castle, near Dorchester, the grandest earthwork in the world. The great stone ramparts of Dolebury on Mendip and Worlesbury on the Bristol Channel are outliers to the stone circles of Stanton Drew, while Cadbury Castle in the valley of the Stour and the Parret is an obvious junction between the megalithic areas of the Mendips, South Western Wilts, and the Dorset Downs Old Sarum, north of Salisbury, gathers the ends of a net work of green roads within its mighty fist The Berkshire earthworks keep steadily along the line of the Downs between Avebury and Streatley, while Mr Allcroft could hardly have spoken of the 'unity of purpose' between the earthworks of Somerset, Wiltshire, and South Wales as a "picturesque" conclusion, if those earthworks had not formed a geographical entity And if we go further afield, we can take a triangle with Hastings as one point, Castle Rising by the Wash as the second, and Bradbury Banks in North Western Wilts as the apex, and trace two enormous series of zoned encampments three hundred miles long

The earthwork has, of course, been usually regarded as a military fortress and has been classified accordingly into the hill fort, the promontory fort, etc But when we consider the intercommunications of the great earthworks, their relations to megalithic monuments, their similarity of design together with their coherence of geographical plan, we shall be forced to revise this too simple definition Since their necklaces are laid out along our uplands without any regard for the isolations of tribal or other territorial divisions, they could hardly have served merely as fortifications



in tribal warfare. If they were constructed for a military purpose, the enemy must have been expected from overseas. In that case, their disposition must have been different, and what enemy so formidable as to approach England in armed fleets could have been in the minds of a people who built earthworks which, to be adequately manned, would have comfortably taken millions of men? It has been pointed out that Maiden Castle would need two hundred and fifty thousand men to garrison it adequately. And if the great earthworks were built during the megalithic periods, as many good authorities hold and as their grandeur of scale in conformity with that of the megalithic monuments indicates, they were certainly a pitiable failure for their purpose, when small marauding bands of Celtic tribes were able to dominate the country by force of arms from about 1000 B.C. onwards. To us it seems much more likely that if the earthworks served a defensive strategy at all, they were the means to overawe the organized labour needed to construct them and other works on the same plane of magnitude.

It is when we turn to examine the earthworks separately that we find further evidence for other uses than those of defence. Avebury itself is, for instance, "environed with an extraordinary great vallum," to quote Aubrey, of the same general appearance and style as those of the other earthen walls of the chalk. As the fosse was within this rampart, no fear of foe could have nerved the sinews of its builders. Whether or no the Avebury rampart was contemporary with the circles, and there is no evidence to show that it was not, it unquestionably represented the rounding off of a religious building. Other earthworks have their fosses within the ramparts, but, what is still more to the purpose, other earthworks with their ditches normally placed were plainly more concerned with gods than with men. There are two ways of inquiry by which we can estimate the truth of this. One is the

axiom of the continuity of sacred sites. The churches of St Michael (who was the old sun god Christianized) in Cornwall, for instance, were erected within ancient earthworks, and the same is true of other churches in other parts of the country—Fimber in Yorkshire, Old Sarum on Salisbury Plain, once the seat of the cathedral, Knowlton in Dorset, Chorlesbury in Bucks, and others. Other earthworks (Yarnbury in Wilts, Cley Hill in Somerset, Lambert's Castle in Dorset) were up to quite recently (and in some cases still are) places of assembly for fairs, folk dances, and games with the stamp of antiquity upon them. No folklorist would question the immemorial tradition of these festivals, while no place is more tenacious of its original purpose than one with religious associations. The games and Morris dances of yesterday were the sacred rites of prehistory.

The second way of investigation is through the contiguity of the earthworks with other indubitably sacred monuments. Some earthworks, for example (Bratton Castle in Wilts, Minchinhampton Camp in Derbyshire, Uley Bury Camp near Stroud, Walbury Camp on Inkpen Beacon), possess long barrows or megaliths either within their folds or within arm's length of them. It may be claimed that men are so obstinately irrational that to invite attack upon their most sacrosanct memorials by fortifying them was the very thing they were most likely to do. This is, indeed, a formidable argument and one not likely to be neglected by the student of history. But when we consider the powerful and numerous indications for a peaceful occupation of England by the megalithic peoples—the dearth of serious weapons, particularly in the first period, previous to the arrival of the Celtic nomads, the use of the bronze dagger for ceremonial purposes and as a symbol of rank, the interrelations between settlements, the immense toil involved in the erection of monuments, the comparative peacefulness

of 'Neolithic' penetration abroad, the lack of any substantial evidence for a warlike Europe before the restless invasions of the heterogeneous Celtic bands, and the difficulty of conceiving who could have been the collective enemy against which the systematized 'fortifications' of the earthworks were constructed—we are the more inclined to doubt the belligerent purpose of the older forms of these earthworks, and to observe their relation to the sacred megaliths as supporting this conclusion. We shall return to this question in our last chapter. But we may add here that all the evidence we possess about the earliest forms of warfare in human society points to the fact that it was undertaken by mobile peoples who made very little use of fortification. The peoples who fortified were, on the contrary, unwarlike. And it is interesting to note that the earthwork was sometimes a substitute for building in stone, as the stone 'celt' has been called a substitute for the copper chisel of the Mediterranean.

There are some earthworks—Dolebury and Worlesbury in Somerset, Bindon and Chalbury in Dorset, and many of the Cornish Camps—that were originally built not of earth but of stone blocks. The magnificent inner rampart of Dolebury, with its matchless curve against the skyline, has its base strewn with fallen stones along its entire length. Stone building was undoubtedly a sacred office in megalithic times and was not secularized until Roman innovation. This at once suggests ceremonial rather than military motives for the construction of the great earthworks. But the stone camps are important for another reason, which opens up wide avenues to understanding. For the Celts were emphatically not builders in stone at all, and by using our eyes we are able to witness a progressive degeneration in the ambitious use of stone between the first megalithic era and the Celtic invasions during the latter part of the second era, usually called the "Bronze Age." The more finished and sophisticated

Stonehenge succeeds the more rugged but far grander Avebury, which could contain without stretching a dozen copies of it. The stone chambered long barrow of Megalithic I and the dolmen of Megalithic I and the morning of Megalithic II were small into the 'cist,' or cairn, of the Bronze Age 'tumulus.' According to the British Museum authorities, the "kistvaen" or degenerate cist is contemporary with the crematory urn, which they date at about 1000 B.C.—the period of the first Celtic inroads. When the Celts first appeared in England, that is to say, stone work was in the last stage of its long decline, while the full Celtic period betrays no sign of it.

This is extremely interesting. It seems to indicate a relationship in progressive decline between the three eras of pre-Roman Britain, with which we shall have to deal in a later chapter. The desuetude of stone work is, too, highly significant from the fact that the megalithic peoples are principally distinguished for their use of stone, and the religious forms associated with it. Secondly, it definitely places the laborious stone citadel within the megalithic pale. This type of cirque is not distinguishable from the average oval earthwork of the great period. But the rectangular earthwork, of which there are numerous examples on the Downs, is a different thing altogether—meaner, less stately, and clumsier in make. It suggests a decline in the scope and scale of building in earth parallel with the decline of the cist into the kistvaen and of the 'Bronze Age' tumulus into the Celtic mound, which is insignificant. At the same time, both the Celtic cultivation system and the Celtic village (viz., the Glastonbury Lake Village) were constructed upon the rectangular plan, while these square or oblong earthworks are often found in the neighbourhood of unquestionably Celtic remains. Since the Celts were certainly of a mobile and pastoral mode of living (as the works of the megalithic peoples show their pre-

ference for fixed settlement) the lighter, less statuesque, and more easily constructed form of rectangular earthwork would have suited their needs as the waved edifices of the greater oval earthworks would not. The one type of earthwork suggests a population depending upon flocks and herds rather than agriculture for their livelihood, the other suggests a more highly organized community who dug themselves deeper into the land and formed large conceptions of a unified control.

Nor shall we be at fearful variance with archaeological authority in handing over the oval earthwork to the men of the megaliths. An astonishing confusion prevails in the ascription of its chronology, so much so that the zealous student will go out of the same door as in he went. But taking field club records and museum catalogues with the pronouncements of professional antiquaries, one is struck with the fact that the view of Professor Scarth (*Roman Britain*), that 'Antiquarians are generally agreed that the most elaborate and most strongly fortified earthworks are generally the most ancient,' corresponds with that type of opinion which considers the evidence without much concern for whither it leads. The other type of opinion forms its conclusions more from a theory of progressive evolution which regards the three ages of pre Roman Britain ("Neolithic," "Bronze Age," and Celtic) as representing successive stages of advance from savagery towards comparative civilization. We have already outlined the difficulties with which this view is confronted. So far as a general perspective permits us to make definite statements, the earthworks of the type of Maiden Castle, Battlesbury, Cadbury, Avebury, Yarnbury, Old Sarum, Barbury, Dolebury, and their kin are coeval with other monuments in earth and stone which certainly belong to the first and second megalithic eras. Nor is the archaeological evidence pure and simple destructive of this generalization.

It is a stimulating reflection upon the large rhythms of megalithic building that a Roman castrum was constructed within the fortifications—three quarters of a mile in length—of Hod Hill. This frontier camp, with its brother, Hambledon Hill, guards the eastern end of the Vale of Blackmoor, through which the Ridgeway passes on its way south-west along the Dorset Downs. Nor shall we acquire a just estimate of the powers of megalithic man in our country by reference to archæology alone. Aesthetic values, measurement of style, have real weight. Thus, the resemblance of the Avebury rampart to other earth works on the same scale cannot be missed by any traveller with an eye for shape and country, while the rampart itself is a perfect match in atmospheric impression to the huge and rugged stones of the circles. The peculiar individuality of the megalithic style is common to both. This is a valuable index to date.

### III—WHAT THEY WERE FOR

There remain to be discussed certain clues to other uses for the great earthworks. Their strategic claims are obvious, but their dominating positions, scanning wide landscapes, may have served as landmarks, observation posts, halting stations for industrial traffic, much better than as encampments for soldiery. It is plain from the example of Eggardon Camp, the key to south western Dorset and a node of many track ways, situated some miles north-east of Bridport, that the oval earthwork was sometimes nothing more nor less than a walled town. For the ramparts contain one of the largest "Neolithic" pit-villages in England. The vallum encompassing the hut-circles of Grim's Pound on Dartmoor answered the same purpose. Other camps, of which Cissbury, on the Sussex Downs, is the most striking, were industrial centres. It does not affect the argument that the ramparts of Cissbury were probably younger than the famous flint-quarries.

The earthwork must have had something to do with the mines, and it must be remembered that the industrious citizens of megalithic England were flint workers in both periods

As an aperçu into the industries of megalithic man, Dolebury-on Mendip is even more important than Cissbury. The interior is what is known locally as a "gruffy ground" of old lead mining works. Dolebury, in fact, is an abandoned factory whose smelting pits and dumps are still visible. Small mounds of hæmatite also exist there, and if the stone lovers did not value this substance, it is strange that the renowned hæmatite region of Oxfordshire (Rollright) should have been so densely occupied by them. For there are the stone circles and long barrow whose abundant crop of superstitions and ancient lore of kingship have persisted to the present day. The Romans certainly scarred Mendip in their rather careless search for lead, from which they extracted silver, but their workings have been repeatedly shown to have been on the sites of a far more ancient mining enterprise. The Celts are known as iron-miners but not as lead workers, while there is a profusion of megalithic remains in all the richer carboniferous or lead bearing limestone areas of England. And if the ancients valued gold, as we know they did from the deposits of gold ornaments in Spanish "Neolithic" tombs, if they dug like badgers for flint, as we know they did, there seems no good reason why the secret of silver in lead should not have fired their energies and caused their prospectors to settle on many a rude and bony barren of English land.

So much for the walled town and the industrial hive. E. J. Burrow, in *Ancient Earthworks and Camps of Somerset* writes "Contrary to general and common belief, it must be conceded that the great majority of the enclosures we call camps were used by the Iberians or their successors as dwelling-places pro-

ected, quite naturally, by a strong bank and ditch in the same way as the medieval city was protected by a wall and moat" If we add the walled factory to the walled town, the military citadel cannot have it all its own way Can we discover any further purpose for the oval earthwork?

No observer can take his delight among 'these silent mementoes of mortality' without noting the frequent coincidence between them and the terraces that descend the flanks of so many of the chalk Downs This is particularly true of Battlesbury Camp on the margin of the chalk escarpment in Western Wilts Here the terraces are positively a continuation of the 'wave swoln' ramparts, and many other terraces are built down the slopes of the girdled hills These terraces, again, pursue a westerly course, with interruptions probably due to the use of the plough when the Downs were cultivated in modern times, from the Pewsey Vale, near Avebury, to the borders of Wiltshire in the west, where is a great concentration both of terraces and earthworks A fierce controversy has long raged as to whether these terraces were marked out by the plough or delved by the spade—whether, in fact, they belong to the Saxon strip system of cultivation or were the cornfields of the megalithic colonists As we propose to show in a subsequent chapter, the plough theory is now out of date, so that if these terraces were, indeed, agricultural works, their relation to the earthworks is full of meaning It is tenable, therefore, that earthworks in their vicinity were granaries, elevators of grain as well as of the heart, and the profusion of imposing earthworks on the borders of Wiltshire and Somerset could be explained as a series of storehouses on the margin of the Mendip country, in which limestone region terraces are exceedingly rare That there was active communication between Mendip and the Wiltshire Downs we have already set forth



We have had no space to praise the large gestures with which the men of the megaliths moulded the contours of the hills into their earthworks. They have, in truth, added a new dignity to Nature without departing from the harmonious graces of her Downland. In our age, many victories have been accomplished over Nature, but none can say that we have made her more beautiful than we found her. That is a tribute we cannot withhold from the builders of the earthworks. They have ennobled the Downland slopes and curves and kneaded them into a continuity with human history, in which Nature and man are not at odds. It is partly the solitude of these earthen castles and partly their thronged human memories which remove the wanderer along their enormous crests from the multitudinous cares and littlenesses of the present. He will have for his eye the exquisite undulations of the Downland slopes and the patterns of the 'coloured counties,' for his feet the resilient turf sown with divers kinds of delicate wild flowers, for his mind the weaving of the threads of the past into a form, and for his heart, peace.

## CHAPTER IV

### *THE FARMERS AND PROSPECTORS OF THE BIG STONES*

#### I—MINING

THE problem of the mining energies of the megalithic peoples is forced upon us through examining the distribution of their monuments. We have already observed that Dolebury was a mining camp, Hamdon Hill, Cissbury, Windmill Hill, Grime's Graves, and other centres show the intensity with which flint working was pursued, while the partiality for settlement in

wildernesses of limestone and granite was plainly not dictated by thought of pasturage. We have also suggested that the chalk, granite, and limestone regions had a good deal to say to each other. That the men of the second megalithic epoch or pre Celtic "Bronze Age" were seekers after metals is perfectly obvious. The aristocratic value attached to the bronze dagger in burials is adequate testimony in itself. Lead working, again, probably for silver, is sufficiently attested by the coincidence of round barrows and megaliths upon the carboniferous soils of the limestone. For the lead districts, stone circles appear in the Isle of Man, the Cheviots, and the Western Isles. Dolmens and stone circles star the limestone wastes of North and South Wales, long barrows and stone circles those of Derbyshire, while there is a cluster of round barrows and earthworks on Mendip and most pronouncedly in the Charterhouse and Priddy districts, where the land is sapless desert and the yield of lead is much more abundant than elsewhere. The circles of Arbor Lowe in Derbyshire, which we have described as a miniature of Avebury, were set up within a quarter of a mile of old lead workings.

It is equally evident that the round barrow men set great store by gold, tin, copper, amber, hæmatite, jet, shale, purple dye, and very probably pearl-shell and surface iron for strike-a-lights. We have pointed out that Rollright in Oxfordshire was a nucleus of occupation, and its products were hæmatite (used possibly for pigmentation) and iron pyrites. Amber, obtained from Scandinavia, occurs plentifully in the round barrows of Wiltshire and Dorset. Whitby, a jet region, was another stone circle township. Dolmens, stone circles, and long and round barrows sprout vigorously in the copper areas of Cornwall, Devon, the Lake District, the Isle of Man, and other parts of Wales. Shale (as we saw in an earlier chapter) was

certainly obtained from Purbeck The tin of Cornwall has been persistently associated with the grasping traders of Phœnicia and Carthage, but the correspondence of megaliths and tin mines is particularly close in Cornwall, which the authorities almost unanimously declare to have been the county seat of the oldest megaliths On Bodmin Moor, for instance, is one of the most impressive stone circles in Cornwall, and scattered about within four hundred yards of it are four derelict shafts of tin mines, whose modernity does not affect the fact that the neighbourhood held rich deposits of tin Tin must have been a traditional quest when the Phœnicians began to feel their way westward after the downfall of seafaring Crete from the incursion of the Celtic Dorians about 1000 B.C.

But the magnet of the granite districts must surely have been gold, which, with copper, was the earliest metal valued in the ancient world Besides the gold deposits of Dartmoor, Camborne Moor, the Lands End, Anglesea, and other well marked regions of Cornwall, Devon, and Wales (particularly Merioneth), many gold-bearing rivers exist in South Scotland, Forfar, Inverness, Fife, Perthshire, and Sutherland, and every one of these areas is studded with dolmens, stone circles and barrows Productive Dartmoor swarmed with hut circles It was hardly necessary for the megalithic peoples to export their gold from Ireland, an ancient gold land like the Sudan of the dynastic Egyptians, from Spain or from Brittany to England, when a metal which has dazzled and corrupted man more than any other in the world lay accessible within our own doors As for flint, it can hardly be a shot in the dark that it must have been in some measure responsible for the extensive settlement of the Downs

For information upon the lure of the purple dye in England, there is abundant material in F. W. Jackson's *Shells as Evidence of the Migrations of Early*

*Culture* According to him, South Western England was a very ancient prospecting ground for shell-purple, that tremendous industry both of the Cretans and the Tyrians, pearl shell and conch shell which is still used on the Mediterranean littoral as a trumpet. The Somerset coast yielded multitudes of the purple-yielding *Purpura lapillus*, and it is a fact, therefore, of surpassing interest that a shell of this mollusc, used by the Tyrians, was found in a round barrow cist on Cop Hill, near Warminster, on the borders of Wiltshire and Somerset. Pearl-mussel has been revealed among the 'Neolithic' remains of Denbighshire, North Wales, and Western Ireland, and other pearl- and purple shell of various species occur at Bury Camp in Sussex, in "kitchen middens" near Corfe Castle, a neighbourhood where megalithic remains are abundant, and among what good authorities hold to be the pre-"Bronze Age" shell-dumps of Devon and Cornwall. Certainly the use of shell-purple is of extremely venerable antiquity in Britain, and the Phœnicians sought a dark shade here called "Black Purple." As for pearl shell, Cæsar was thinking of the large British pearls when he invaded us, and the distribution of megaliths along pearl rivers in Wales and Scotland is significant.

The Age of Bronze or the second chapter of the megaliths between the close of the first chapter and the opening of the last phase of the "Bronze Age" by the Celtic sword was, therefore, a period of intensive mining. It seems curious on that account that its forerunner, the New Stone, or "Neolithic" Age, as it has hitherto been called, should have been denied all knowledge of metals for the sole reason that no metals have been discovered with its funerary offerings in England. We know that the long-headed Iberians of the first megalithic colonization were miners, because of their active flint operations at Grime's Graves near Thetford and elsewhere. If their

successors knew metals and they did not, we are faced with the implication that a cleavage, almost as fundamental as that between primitive and civilized modes of life, divided the two peoples. For knowledge of metals has always been a scientific definition of a civilized society, and if we add agriculture thereunto, we have the twin foundation stones of civilization. But there is no evidence that the men of the long barrows can legitimately be differentiated from the men of the round. The radical distinctions between them were not cultural but physical. Both peoples were builders of megaliths, and it is impossible to tell whether certain dolmens and stone circles were built on the authority of the long barrow dead or the round. And the megalithic culture was so peculiar and indeed idiosyncratic in itself that it seems arbitrary to draw sharp lines between its two epochs. Both peoples, again, possessed certain religious institutions in common, had definite social ranks, held commerce with heaven, and equipped their dead nobility for a continuation of life in the world of spirits. Other indications of a transition, rather than a break, between Megalithic I and Megalithic II have already been given, and further ones will be made manifest in the last chapter of the book.

In the account given above of the geographical relationship between mines and megaliths, we have also seen that as both peoples shared the chalk areas, so they did the limestone and the granite. In Cornwall and on Dartmoor, the principal mining districts of the South of England, a large proportion of the Reliquiæ, both above and below the ground, were Megalithic I and II. It seems, again, rather fanciful to allow a lead-mining connection for Arbor Lowe and none with any metals at all for its grand original, Avebury. The lead-mining area of Mendip was, as we have pointed out, congested by the round barrows. The long barrow of Wellow at the eastern tip of Mendip

is the only one surviving. But there were once three others in the carboniferous region—those at Orchard leigh, Butcombe (Fairy's Toot) and Charmborough Hill near Holcombe, where the land is pitted and creased for miles with old lead-workings. There were once at least twenty three long barrows on the Dorset Downs, where the shale industry was prosecuted, while purple shell occurs among the debris of both periods. There is, indeed, *nothing* to distinguish this dual occupation of the mining areas, except that the latter of the twain was the more extensive, as common sense would expect it to be. If distribution affords us a genuine guide, and assuredly it is the most telling evidence we possess, then the men both of the long and the round barrows were skilled and ardent metal lurgists. And, indeed, so far as the folk-lore country superstitions are concerned, the mining tradition lingers more tenaciously with the Iberians than with the Broadheads who came after them. "Fairy gold" is persistently associated with long barrows, delving the earth with the Iberians. And if both megalithic peoples were miners, we have found the reason why they came to Britain.

How, therefore, are we to account for the absence of metals in the funerary deposits of the first-comers? For if our line of argument is not fallacious, it is to these first-comers, presumed to be totally ignorant of metals, that we owe the exploration and exploitation of the mineral resources of Britain. It is strange, indeed, when we marshal all the signs and clues at our disposal, that an *absence* of metals from the tombs of a people with so elaborate a culture as the men of Avebury should be assumed to denote an *ignorance* of them. And our contention is that the two words do not mean the same thing. If out of sight were equivalent to being out of mind, the infidelities of lovers would mount to heaven. Considering the interrelations between the two periods, we are

logically justified in assuming only that metals were in commoner use during the second period. Add to this the fact that metals are also frequently absent from round barrows, and that long barrows betray an extremely sparse use of any funerary offerings at all, and we can the more confidently echo Canon Greenwell's words in *British Barrows* that 'the absence of metals in the long barrows is not in itself a proof that the persons who erected them were ignorant of their use.' There may, of course, be more than one reason for this absence, and it is possible that as the chambers of the long barrows were open and the cists of the round barrows were closed, the most valuable objects (*ie* metals) were robbed from the former by the Celts, the Saxons, the Romans, or the Danes. In view of the fact, however, that many long barrows, when first excavated, were found to be intact, this is not an adequate reason.

The latter suggestion, that the Iberian metals were exported, opens up very wide issues, the analysis of which must be left to the next chapter. It is that the metals scraped out of English soil, washed out of English streams, ground out of English rock, were exported to the home lands either of the voyagers themselves or their forefathers. This export was continued in the second megalithic era. But the long established occupation of the country and the wider settlements of the "Bronze Age" kept the metals, which plainly were of religious significance and valued for other reasons than as pure wealth or pure industrial raw material, in native use and to accompany native rather than foreign notables in their journey to the hierarchies of the next world. It remains to explore the mystery of those homelands.

If, therefore, copper and tin, the constituents of bronze, were known to the long barrow men, the inference is that the polished stone or flint celt, the common tool of "Neolithic" England, was an

inferior substitute for the copper and bronze chisel of contemporary Mediterranean lands. Harold Peake, for instance, has put it on record that the stone axes of Morbihan in Brittany were an imitation of the copper axes of Cyprus. Siret, the authority on megalithic Spain, makes a similar suggestion for the non-metal implements of the Peninsula. And if the megalithic people who first prospected Britain came from civilized countries to which metal tools were familiar, and dared the perils of our shores because they were in demand, then the most valued commodities were despatched to the home ports of the mariners, and the abundant supply of flint served as a ready material for the chisels and other indispensables that were left behind. On the other hand, if the reader prefers the more old-fashioned explanation that the men of Avebury and the long barrows were a rude and contentious folk who landed in England without any definite object in doing so, and were conquered by another metal-using one (the "Beaker Folk") in the struggle for existence, who in their turn were overwhelmed by a still more highly evolved culture—that of the Celts—he is entitled to do so. We have only to record the fact that the evidence, taken as a whole, lends poor support for this theory.

We have more than once used the word "colonist" in the foregoing pages, and the extensive remains of the megalithic periods will indeed permit no other. We cannot, therefore, admit that the relations maintained between Europe and Britain during the megalithic occupation were mainly those of trade. The trader leaves a far lighter impression than the men of Avebury and Stonehenge left upon our land, and not the most superficial observer can claim that megalithic monuments are objects of barter. It thus seems highly unlikely that the funerary offerings with which they were intimately associated could have been so. Simple commercial relations, as Siret remarked, do not afford



an explanation for the spread of religious ideas. Nor, it is hardly necessary to add, was trade, in the accepted meaning of the term, in existence in Western Europe at the time that Avebury and Stonehenge were built.

## II — AGRICULTURE

The problem as to whether the megalithic peoples, particularly the earlier mariners, were agriculturists is one that imperatively demands solution. For agriculture spells civilization in larger capitals even than the knowledge of metals. Judging from the evidence we have already adduced, we can only say that if the men of Avebury and Stonehenge were not tillers of the soil, they ought to have been.

The true distinction between a primitive and a civilized community is that the one gathers and the other produces its food. The religious complex of the megalith-builders, embracing a theory of survival, a knowledge of astronomy, and other theological elements presupposing a priestly caste, ideas of theocratic government, and, very probably, divine kingship, an intricate organization implying definite relations between rulers and ruled and widely dispersed, a fine workmanship in tools and funerary objects and a sense of breadth and generosity of effort in massive works of earth and stone—these are not what we look for in a primitive society, in an Eskimo, a Punan, a Lapp, a Pygmy Negrito. It has been repeatedly shown, too, that the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Babylonia were woven out of ears of barley, while all the most important deities of the archaic East—Tammuz, Osiris, Isis, Ishtar—were gods and goddesses of grain. One of the supreme functions of the early Pharaohs was the cutting of irrigation canals, while the rites of Adonis, Osiris, Kybele, Dionysus mingled theories of the resurrection of the dead with agricultural seasons. To deprive the megalithic colonists of

England—those terrific diggers and engineers—of an agricultural system reduces them to the grotesques of an Ingoldsby legend, capering bodies without heads

When we turn the pages of archæological records, we shall once more be confronted with a division of opinion. Antiquarian stalwarts like Mortimer, Boyd Dawkins, Walter Johnson, and others, are convinced that the Iberians were proficient farmers. On the other hand, the official school of thought, which derives from Seebohm's theory of the terrace or "lynchet," maintains that it was plough made and continuous with the Saxon "strip system" of valley cultivation. The one view, that is to say, sees the spade hewn terrace descending the slopes of the Downs as an integral part of the works of megalithic man, the other sees the plough-shared lynchet ascending their lower declivities as the highest tide of a far later, and, it must be said, far cruder settlement of the valleys. No authority would venture to dispute the fact that the Saxons were not hill-dwellers, and we have inherited their preference for valley habitation almost to the present day, when the tendency to take to the hills is once more asserting itself—with disastrous results to their beauty and seamliness. One view or the other, therefore, must be the true one, for the squared cultivation banks of the Celts, far less abundant than the terraces (as would be expected of a people who always travelled light), bear no resemblance to the balks and platforms of the hill side terrace. Lastly, it could not seriously be claimed that we owe the abundance of ancient lynchets in England and Scotland to the Romans in the construction of their vineyards. The Romans may well have used some of the terraces that offered advantages for the cultivation of the grape—they were certainly not the originators of the terrace in this country.

The Seebohm view, that the terraces were formed by the plough turning the sod downhill, is faced by

such crushing objections that logic compels us to regard it as untenable. We will briefly consider the most important. It does not explain the presence of terraces in mountainous and other regions to which the Saxons are known not to have penetrated. It ignores the so frequent correspondence between terraces and earthworks. It is silent upon the facing of many terraces with flint and stone, and the excavation not merely of flint and bronze sickles from terrace platforms but of implements of "Neolithic" type from the terraces at Saffron Walden. It leaves as a total mystery the discovery of a mealing stone (now in the Devizes Museum) in one of the Wiltshire long barrows and of a skeleton in another near Warminster, between whose teeth, tartared with decayed cereal matter, was a husk of corn.

But the plough theory of Seebohm breaks down upon the application of a much simpler test—an uncontrovertible mathematical formula which a school boy, and even the present writer (to whom figures are an insuperable Cabalism) can grasp. If, that is to say, the plough did turn the soil downhill, the top balk must be the height of the soil removed from the lower level, and the lowest the height of the soil falling from the level above it. For the height of the balk is caused by the soil that falls from the higher level and what is removed from the lower. The highest and lowest balks must, therefore, measure exactly half the height of the balks interposed between them. We have never yet measured a single series of terraces on a hill-slope, in Berkshire, in Dorset, or in Wiltshire, which responded to this acid test. We are not, therefore, without justification in forming the conclusion that the terraces not only look as though they belonged to the slopes of the hills—they do belong to them.

The distribution of the terraces in England amply corroborates our previous estimate of the extensiveness, the co-ordination and the intelligent planning of

the megalithic civilization. It likewise opens up interesting avenues of thought upon the nature of the relations that appear to have existed between the mining works mainly situated on the granite and limestone, and the agricultural, flint-quarried, living areas whose headquarters were the Downs. On the North Downs of Kent, for instance, terraces were cut on the same hill as that traversed by the Pilgrim's Way and topped by the dolmen of Kit's Coty House. In Berkshire, a very abundant and distinguished series of terraces stairs the camp-posted Downs as they near their junction with the North Wiltshire Downs, dominated by Avebury. Here the trackway system radiates the winding greenways which ultimately link Berkshire with Hampshire, East Anglia, Wiltshire, and the Midlands, and Dorset, Devon, and Somerset, with Wiltshire. Terracing was generous in the Avebury environment itself, and Walker's Hill, Martinsell Hill, and the green walls of the Pewsey Vale once formed hanging cornfields which nodded a kinship with Marlborough, built like the gardens of Babylon on a grand staircase of "shepherds' steeps," as the terraces are locally known. The gliding, waving lines with which the Downs are carved between Allington and Shepherd's Shore, further westward towards the Somerset border, remind one of certain indented patterns on very old British pottery. When one reaches the great outposts of Battlesbury, Bratton Castle and other earthworks in the Westbury and Warminster neighbourhood, large scale terraces again diversify the flowing contour of the Downs.

But once out of the chalk soil and on the limestone of Mendip, the terraces have disappeared. There is little terracing in all Somerset, and the only considerable acreage of corn was down the slopes of Cadbury Castle (one of the Camelots) on the borders of Dorset some twenty miles south of Mendip. But, as we have seen, the megalithic occupation of Mendip was exten-

sive, and it is rather arbitrary speculation to assume that the Mendip men abandoned cereals owing to the change in geographical conditions. We are brought back into touch with the suggestion made in the last chapter—namely, that the signal terrace cum-earthwork concentration of Downland end in Western Wilts had a meaning in it. If Battlesbury, for instance, was, in its original intent, a granary store house, the hamlets of the Mendip lead miners might have had other means of food-supply than that provided by hunting and stock-rearing.

We can best avoid the treacherous waters of landless hypothesis by examining the distribution of terraces in other parts of England. The terrace-surveyor will, for instance, have poor reward for his labours by spying out the Cornish peninsula\* and the Dartmoor plateau. But the Dorset Downs were terraced to an extent which must actually have produced larger harvests than in Wiltshire itself. The lynchets are also of great size, reaching (near Maiden Newton) ninety feet long for the platforms and thirty feet high for the balks, and stretching eight deep for nearly a quarter of a mile. There are literally miles of terraces between Eggardon Camp, with its "Neolithic" settlement and Cerne Abbas, where the famous Giant of the "Bronze Age" straddles the imposing front of the hillside with his uplifted club.

Derbyshire and the Yorkshire Wolds, the Cotswolds, and the mining settlements to the east and west of them, the mining and residential areas of Westmorland and Durham, reproduce the same features as those of Mendip and North Wiltshire. Areas such as the Whitby jet region, the Cheviots, and the Lake Dis

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\* N.B.—Though there is a fine series of stone-faced terraces near Gurnard's Head (Zennor) between St Ives and the Land's End. Megaliths are in the neighbourhood.

tract, on the other hand, combined their industrial and agricultural activities, and the nature of their soils was favourable to semi isolated, self supporting populations. We have not, of course, rounded off the whole tally of terrace-distribution—terracing, for instance, is profuse in the district of the Herefordshire Beacon, which afforded an additional link, besides the Cotswolds, with Wales.

But we think that the interplay, the duet we might almost call it, between the mining and agricultural settlements of megalithic England gains distinctness from the geographical disposition of the lynchets and merits closer scrutiny than it has hitherto received. Of one thing we may be fairly certain. If these lynchets were a Western variant of the widespread terraced irrigation systems of the ancient world, the motives for the intensive megalithic occupation of the Downs are made clearer. It takes more than flint-mining, more than a tenacious habit of hill-dwelling, and much more than a search for good pasturage to explain a cathedral-city of the scope of Avebury with all its annexes. The quintessential importance of agriculture to an organized and laborious community is an explanation wide enough to cover even Avebury. And the agricultural ferment of megalithic England helps us towards the solution of another problem which has much vexed the student of archæology. That is the cause of the abundance of stone-chambered long barrows on the Cotswolds. The numerous terraces of the same region aid us in determining the answer, and it must be remembered that though the long barrows of the abundantly terraced Dorset Downs were, for some reason, much more rarely chambered (though dolmens still exist in Dorset), there were once many more of them in existence than there are now.

We can scarcely leave the problem of the terraces, very inadequately dealt with in archæological records, without referring to terraced irrigation as a peculiarity

of the very distinctive megalithic culture in other parts of the world. In the Far East, for instance, terracing (often by means of stone facing) occurs in America among the Pueblo Indians and the Mayas, and very impressively up the slopes of the Andes as a constituent of the fallen Empire of Peru. In the Pacific, it is to be found in Easter Island (in conjunction with stone images), in Hawaii (in conjunction with pyramids), in Fiji, New Zealand, various Melanesian island groups, in the Carolines, in Java, in the Philippines, and also in India. In all these examples the irrigated terrace is inseparable from the megalithic monument. The same organic relationship holds good of West and East Africa, Madagascar, and Arabia. We should not expect to find it in Babylonia, for the basin system of the Tigris and Euphrates differed from the canal system of the Nile, which has been suggested as the source of the terrace. Among the tremendous archaic ruins of the Rhodesian gold mines, one hundred and fifty square miles of hills eaten into from base to crown by terraces have been reported, and in conjunction with 'forts' like our own Battlesbury, only of stone. In Syria, Mount Lebanon was richly terraced, and the same is true of the hills of the Cyclades, which derived their stone-culture from Minoan Crete. It is open to the reader to decide whether these facts are of casual import or afford evidence of cultural contacts that ultimately make a cultural whole of megalithic civilization.

## CHAPTER V

### *BURIALS*

#### I—THE PATERNITY OF THE LONG BARROW

ARCHÆOLOGY, which will be more and more widely recognized as casting an intensely significant light

upon the problems of modern life, is in itself a cult of the dead. When the mind weighs the overpowering importance attached to the same cult by our megalithic ancestors, it is difficult to believe that their lives were occupied with anything else but death. The building of stone monuments was certainly inspired by the cult of the dead, while the depositing of such a variety of artefacts beside their bones argues a psychical association between religion and industry which goes deeper than the constant geographical alliance between mines and megaliths. The passing of the life of Osiris into the sprouting grain, and the innumerable supernatural significations of agriculture, suggest that corn growing meant a great deal more to the ancients than a means of adjusting food supply to the demands of population. In Greece, according to Pausanias, the rites of Demeter were celebrated within stone circles. Metals themselves were "life-givers" in the ancient East, and shared with many other substances the power of prolonging existence both before and after death.

But if a study of burial customs reveals something of the mentality of a civilization which preceded the Roman in Britain, it may be an equally valuable index finger to its source. And if we discover whence our megalithic colonists came, we shall know a vast deal more as to what manner of men they were. We shall be able to illuminate the obscurities of the origin of civilization itself far more searchingly than by traveling the uplands of England alone and groping into its bowels. One school of opinion to-day maintains that the "Neolithic" and "Bronze" Ages evolved their own culture, partly through geographical stimulus, partly through a psychological predisposition to progress in a certain direction. Another makes the evolution of the megalithic cult indigenous to Western Europe, with its main centre in Spain. The megaliths of Western Europe were the foundation of the more



complex architecture of the nations of the Eastern Mediterranean, a hazardous assumption in view of the fact that the Egyptians knew agriculture before 3400 B.C., and that no competent authority would nowadays predate Stonehenge beyond about 1300-1600 B.C.

It is therefore interesting to note exactly contrary data appearing sporadically like outcrops of rock from the latter theory. Thus No. 6 of the Ordnance Survey Papers describes certain structural analogies between the chambered long barrows of the Cotswolds and the mastaba tombs of the Egyptian nobles, and draws the conclusion that the former were derivative from the latter. The British Museum *Guide to the Antiquities of the Bronze Age*, again, describes three anthropomorphic chalk drums excavated from a round barrow on Folkton Wold in Yorkshire as of Ægean inspiration. It points out that the butterfly on one of these drums is also seen on gold roundels taken from the famous shaft graves of Mycenæ, which pre-Ægean settlement was certainly a "Bronze Age" offshoot from Minoan Crete, which in its turn had very definite affinities with dynastic Egypt. Other forms of decoration on these drums, proceeds the British Museum *Guide*, recall those of the great tumulus of New Grange in Ireland, whose spirals were likewise degenerate Ægean, and of Gavrinis in Brittany. "Everything points to the transmission of that influence [Ægean] to Brittany by way of Spain." It is proper to follow up these authoritative signs and portents by summarizing the most recent evidence as to the evolution of the rock-cut tomb in its bearing upon the relations between the culture of Crete and Mycenæ and that of megalithic England.

The rock-cut tomb is a grave of certain definite ground plans, dating from the first megalithic period in Western Europe and found chiefly in Spain, France, and Portugal. One view contends that it was natively developed from the natural grotto in which "Neo-

lithic" remains have been revealed. Its opposite holds that it came from the East. But if the grotto be regarded as a local variant of the rock-cut tomb, there is no essential disparity between the two views. The long barrow and the type of grave known as the "passage dolmen" (a dolmen with a stone tail) are admitted to be two such variants, and the simplest explanation of the reason why they were set up above the ground instead of being cut into the bare rock is that the former process involved a less expenditure of labour in countries where tools were more brittle and primitive and pioneers were less expert than in homelands of the rock-cut tomb. The rock-cut tomb, therefore, may be regarded as the parent of the long barrow and the passage dolmen, and the rock cut tomb adheres to the same general principles of structure in all the regions of Western Europe where it is found.

The same is true of the rock-cut tombs of Crete about the epoch of the Middle Minoan and of Twelfth Dynasty Egypt (both *circa* 2000-1900 B.C.). The ground-plans of these various tombs from the Nile to the Marne differ in length and breadth and sometimes in shape, while those of Western Europe omit the apse attached to the main burial chamber in the Tomb of Amenemhet and those of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt and that of Isopata in Crete, though it is intriguing to find this very apse appearing at the end of the chamber in the long barrow of Wellow or Stony Littleton in Somerset. Otherwise the Egyptian design of passage—forecourt with lateral transepts—shorter passage—main chamber is repeated in Crete, in Majorca, at Arles, and on the Marne, while the Egyptian portrait statues in the transepts of the forecourt are replaced on the Marne by rude anthropomorphic figures in the same position. This last parallel, together with the appearance of "statue menhirs," or monoliths, very roughly carved into the caricature of the human figure in various parts of France, certainly

does suggest that the unhewn monolith is a degenerate form of the stone image or carved obelisk. That would go some way towards explaining the persistent associations of the megaliths with the living dead, and the vast crop of legends relating to the petrification of human beings and the powers of stones to turn into men. In the East the portrait statue actually was a living representative of the mummy, his viceroy to receive offerings.

The funerary offerings of the rock cut tomb are no less important than their structure. In France and Iberia (Palmella, etc.) they consisted of votive axes of jadeite, gold ornaments, a pottery which seems to be an imitation of stone vessels, and pendants and beads made from callais, a substance very similar to turquoise. Ceremonial axes and gold were also deposited in the Cretan rock cut tombs, where the stone vessels suggest originals of some of the pottery forms associated with the Western European rock cut tomb.

The Beaker of the earlier Bronze Age in England may well be another clue. Some archaeologists regard it as peculiar to a "Beaker Folk," whose homeland was the Rhine and Danube. But the relatively late Beakers of the "Bronze Age" were not the first of their family to reach our islands, the former may indeed have been brought by a Continental folk from the Rhineland, though the Rhinelanders had received them from the South. The prototypes seem to have developed in Iberia, and early Beakers, delightfully curved vessels in earthenware of tulip form, were carried northwards on the sea route to Brittany, where the "vase caliciforme" lies abundant in megalithic ruins. Fragments of these same vessels have been excavated from "Neolithic" remains in four different places, and one of them was found in the West Kennet Long Barrow, once the finest specimen of long barrow in England, and built within a mile of Avebury. The "caliciforme" Beaker of Spain seems to

have been carried back into Italy and thence transmitted into Central Europe, where a more massive form was distributed far and wide. This more angular "Bronze Age" Beaker is quite distinct from the earlier type. The origin of the Spanish Beaker has not yet been satisfactorily probed, but vessels with similar curves but of a more squat structure have been found in the Spanish limestone tombs, and these bear all the marks of development from Ægean stone work.

The British Museum handbook (see above), again, describes the decorative kinship between the motives of the Folkton Wold drums and those of New Grange and Gavrinis. It is therefore interesting to record that an octopus, an abundant subject on the polychrome ware of Middle Minoan Crete and presumed to be one of the forms of the Great Mother Goddess, also appears on a stone of a Breton tumulus. New Grange itself has been described by the Director of Antiquities in the Dublin Museum as offering numerous points of resemblance with "the Treasury of Atreus," as one of the domed tumuli of Mycenæ has been wrongly called. The shaft-graves of Mycenæ—which inherited the culture of Late or "Bronze Age" Crete—were surrounded by what are to all intents and purposes stone circles, except that the slabs were formed up in touching order, whereas the stones of the English circles are divided. It has, however, been suggested by recent excavation that the stones of the Stonehenge outer circle, now disappeared, also made a continuous ring of stones touching one another. We have already pointed out earlier in the book that the postern to the Lion Gate of Mycenæ was a simple Trilithon, like those of Stonehenge.

We must not omit to mention here the famous blue glaze beads (segmented and star-shaped) found in certain round barrows of Salisbury Plain, Cornwall, Sussex, and other megalithic counties of South-Western England. The unique attraction of these

beads is twofold. They are identical in shape and colour with certain Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty beads. Secondly, these beads only lasted in Egypt between about 1400 and 1200 B.C., when Hatshepsut, the queen whose voyage to Punt, the God Land (Somaliland), was figured on the funerary monuments of the period, reigned over Egypt. Tutankhamen and the heretic Akhnaton belong to the same epoch of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. Professor Sayce contends that these beads, by their appearance on Salisbury Plain within barrows hard by Stonehenge, fix the date of the great "sun temple" at about 1300 B.C. This is almost certainly a far more accurate date than were the wild and nebulous reckonings fashionable in former years, and is five hundred years later than the "azimuth" calculations of Sir Norman Lockyer. A fierce controversy has raged as to whether these beads were imported as trade articles or were manufactured here by workmen in imitation of their Egyptian originals. The British Museum *Guide* referred to above, Sir Arthur Evans, and Mr. Ludovic Mann believe that they were locally made, not, Mr. Mann says, of glass, but of paste by a highly skilled process. The same type of segmented bead occurs in Late Minoan Crete and megalithic Spain.

All these discoveries are of incalculable importance not merely as evidence, convincing or otherwise, of a cultural exploration of Western Europe by highly civilized peoples originally moving out of the Eastern Mediterranean in search of profitable sources of wealth, but as at last, after decades of rather idle speculation, fastening down the hitherto elusive chronology of the first and second megalithic ages in Britain to more or less definite periods of time. Unduly simplified, therefore, the script runs: Twelfth Dynasty Egypt, Middle Minoan Crete, "Neolithic" Spain, France, and Britain. That is for Avebury and the long barrows. There follow Eighteenth Dynasty

Egypt, Late Minoan Crete (centred in Mycenæ), "Bronze Age" Western Europe up to the break up of the megalithic civilization by the first nomadic bands of Celtic warriors about 1000 B.C. We have, of course, to reckon in hundreds of years, but a very rough estimate gives from 1800 or 1700 to 1400 or 1300 B.C. for the period of Avebury and the long barrows, and from 1400 or 1300 B.C. to 1000 B.C. for the period of Stonehenge and its round barrows.

Accepting for a moment the evidence here set forth (and it has never been dislocated), we have already given reasons for believing that the settlement of Britain was not due to commercial interchange, but was what we might call the effect of a colonial enterprise undertaken by small parties, households perhaps, with workmen, servants, skilled metal hunters, fabricators and the like, and men of privileged rank. A good example of the ancient method of prospecting new lands is supplied by the record of the Eighteenth Dynasty Prince Hepzefa, who departed from his home in Egypt to exploit the Nubian mines, taking with him his entire household. The same kind of transplantation may well have occurred between Spain and Britain as between Crete or Mycenæ and Spain. And in modern times there are innumerable parallels in the opening up of Australia, Canada, Alaska, and other remoter parts of the earth. In all cases, ancient or modern, the consequent settlements build up a culture of their own, reminiscent of, but on a lower plane of achievement than that of, their homelands. Thus the rock-cut tomb declines into the long barrow or passage dolmen, the carved pillar into the unhewn monolith, the copper chisel into the flint or stone celt, the walled town into the earthwork, the original text into the provincial paraphrase. It is not a view which all readers will accept, but it is one which, besides unwinding a story full of colour, movement, and romance, does make sense out of confusion.

Let us return to a final consideration of the evidence. For the extension of the first megalithic colonization westward it is mainly concerned, first, with the racial Iberian type (pure Mediterranean and so Egyptian), the beehive huts of Dartmoor and Portland resembling those of the Egyptian miners in Sinai, and with the structural affinities between the rock-cut tomb north and south of the Eastern Mediterranean and the long barrow of English soil. Funerary objects are largely absent from the long barrows, but they occur in French and Spanish tombs of the same general pattern and of the same period, while similar though finer objects of similar materials appear in similar though more highly finished tombs in Crete during the Age of the Palaces (Minoan II), something later than 2000 B.C. and in the Middle Kingdom of Egypt at much the same time when very close relations with maritime Crete were in being.

In the second megalithic extension westward to Britain, burial offerings were more numerous, for the reason, as we have suggested, that the native products were no longer to the same extent exported. Segmented beads, the Folkton Wold decorative drums, the Beaker once more, a disc of red amber cased in gold resembling one found in the Late Minoan Tomb of the Double Axes, the bronze dagger itself whose Ægean prototype has also been noted, the spiral motive, the stone circle, the purple dye industry, the Trilithon—these and other elements of the second megalithic culture carry the thoughts of the open-minded detective to Mycenæ and Late Minoan Crete before it was overwhelmed by the Dorians, kinsmen in arms of those very Goidels and Brythons who destroyed the civilization of Albion and gave her a new name in the process. Whether the second megalithic wave reached England by way of Spain, like the first, or via the Danube is only a secondary point. It started from the Mediterranean. It is curiously inter

esting that these two megalithic waves of comparatively peaceful expansion in search of metals corresponded with an outburst of energy both in the Ægean and on the Nile, while in both periods the intercourse between Crete and Egypt was more intense than at other times Sir Arthur Evans's famous *Palace of Minos* (vol 1) makes this quite clear

If these cultural affinities are to bear their due weight, they should have been the product of a particular demand supplying a particular energy at a specific time. A consultation of a standard authority like Montelius possesses us of the knowledge that tin, which with copper was the constituent of bronze, did not come into household use in Egypt until the Twelfth Dynasty, and in Crete until the Middle Minoan period (*circa* 2000 B.C.), though it had been valued in Egypt as early back as the Fourth Dynasty. The Middle Minoan Age was also remarkable for a profusion of silver vessels, and we have suggested in the last chapter that silver was extracted from lead long before the Romans exploited the Mendip lead mines. Tin and silver, that is to say, came into common use in the Eastern Mediterranean at the very time that monuments, offering certain fundamental parallels with those of the Nile and the Ægean, were raised in the neighbourhood of the lead- and tin-mines of Britain. More conservative readers are, of course, fully entitled to regard this coincidence as purely accidental. At the same time, if this be so, the more old-fashioned view has to explain the presence of a pair of tin buttons with the primary interment of one of the rock-cut tombs of the Western Mediterranean seaboard. In the common use of tin during the second millennium B.C. in Crete and Egypt, we have, perhaps, found the explanation why metals were absent from the graves of a people who betray other signs of having been fully acquainted with them.

We have already suggested that the reason for the



settlement of the English mining areas by the megalithic Iberians was the tin, gold, copper, and silver to be extracted from them, or, in the case of gold, to be washed out of the rivers. The absence of these metals from the characteristic remains of this people in England may well be evidence the very reverse of the verdict usually given. So far from being ignorant of such metals, the Iberians may have valued them so highly that they sent them back along the road whence they themselves had originally ventured. New ideas have always won very slow acceptance, especially when research and knowledge have become stereotyped, and we must not reject the thought that the ancient Cretans and Egyptians once used the tin and silver wrung from the bowels of Bodmin and Mendip, merely because it is unfamiliar to us. An open mind to the mysteries of the past is of equal value with the power of classifying its objects, and the arbitrary clash between the two means heavy losses to science and history. The reader, we repeat, must form his own conclusions, but if he accept this view we have expounded, he must be prepared to abandon (together with many cherished assumptions based on the hypothesis of the independent progress of nations out of savagery) the terms "Neolithic" and "Bronze Age" for the two divisions of the megalithic epoch in Britain, and adopt one which covers the fact that both periods knew bronze.

## II—THE MOUNT OF SILBURY

From the foregoing pages the reader has, perhaps, gathered that there were only two types of burial mound in England—the long barrow, with or without a passage and chamber of stone blocks, and the round barrow, with or without a cist. But the cult of the dead was too deep a preoccupation with the dwellers in megalithic England for them to have been

content with these only. We have already pointed out the possibility of a funerary design for the stone circle, as Sir Arthur Evans has suggested for Stonehenge, and it is fairly certain that barrow and stone circle had mystic converse the one with the other. But there is yet another type of funerary monument occurring in megalithic England, to which very scant attention has been paid by archæologists. That is the cone-barrow, of which the sacred mount of Silbury, about twelve hundred yards from Avebury, is by far the most illustrious example, not only in England, but in all Europe.

Silbury is a pyramid of chalk rubble which the eighteenth century antiquary Stukeley called "the most magnificent mausoleum in the world, without excepting the Egyptian pyramids." That is extravagant, for it is a little less than one third the height of the Great Pyramid of Cheops at Gizeh, built in the Fourth Dynasty. But with a base of five acres, a truncated top of 110 feet, and a height of 130 feet, it remains, apart from its graciousness of line, the most imposing monument raised in England previous to the Norman Castle, and a rare tribute to the large conceptions of the megalithic civilization. It is not merely a cone barrow, it is a pyramidal hill, and a community which has the ability to make hills has to be taken seriously. It is odd that no archæological record describes this vast structure as a pyramid, since that was its common name fifty years ago, and no other term adequately fits its appearance. There is no need to labour the point that if Silbury be what it looks, it presumably bears something of the same relation to the Egyptian pyramid as does the long barrow to the rock cut tomb. The Egyptian pyramid was, of course, built of beautifully fitting stone blocks, and we have given other instances of earthwork as a substitute for, or degradation of, stonework. A similar process of degradation occurred among the pyramids

of Egypt themselves, both in size and the replacement of a rubble and sand core for the limestone block. But the Egyptian parallel with Silbury is very much more exciting when we consider what the Egyptian pyramid was for. It was the divine house of the Sons of the Sun alone, of those Pharaohs who in death were gathered into the life of their father, Ré, the solar lord of the universe.\* The relations of Silbury to sun measurement have, like those of Stonehenge, been observed by archæologists. It has not, however, been propounded before, except by Stukeley, that Silbury may well have been the proud and prodigious fane of the first king or kings of Avebury, which we have called the first capital of England, and so the nucleus of English civilization. Did the men of Avebury, with their intensive worship of the dead, also believe that their kings ascended the golden stairs and lived for ever in the sky-world? It is at least improbable on the face of it that a mausoleum of the pomp of Silbury could have been built by a population of shepherds assembled on the Marlborough Downs to pasture their flocks. In England, in any case, the pastoral nomad evidently did *not* precede the settled agriculturist, as is too readily assumed was the sequence of culture in other countries.

It is, at any rate, important to examine what associations, other than traditional, Silbury has with Avebury, apart from the fact that the meridian line from Silbury runs directly through the great temple. The fact that the villagers of Avebury were wont to assemble on Silbury for ceremonial occasions may be an index to a structural relationship between them, now obliterated. At the beginning of last century the famous antiquary, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, whose *Antiquities of Wiltshire* contains a fine engraving of Silbury, wrote "I think there can be no doubt that Silbury was one of the component parts of the grand temple at Abury       its position opposite to the

temple and nearly in the centre between the two avenues seems in some degree to warrant this supposition ' Lord Avebury said much the same We are not sure whether this second megalithic avenue ever existed, even though both Stukeley and Colt Hoare vouched for it, but Silbury was built between the avenue of monoliths (a few of which still survive) leading from the Avebury circles to those of Overton Hill and the Beckhampton Long Stone Cove, whither the hypothetical second avenue was presumed to run Moreover, a fosse, now filled in, with an embankment on either side of it, once gave access to Silbury, wherefrom we do not know, and a circle of stones similar to that which once surrounded the West Kennet Long Barrow (a "peristalith"), a few hundred yards farther away to the south of Avebury, encompassed the holy mount Thus Silbury lay between the Overton Circles, the East and West Kennet Long Barrows, the Beckhampton Cove, and Avebury itself Thus it may fairly be claimed as an integral part of the megalithic complex that once made the Marlborough Downs a place of awe and enchantment, and a Mecca or god habitation to which many a flint knapper, gold washer, lead worker, seaman and farmer and pearl fisher must have made pilgrimage from moor and down, river and harbour There he watched the agricultural ceremonies within the circles, or celebrated the death and resurrection of some notable who had vigorously oppressed his brethren in life, or made intercession to the stones for his wife to bear toilers and his terraces good crops And it may have been that in those circles were performed the prototypes of those elaborate religious dances of life and death and the seasons, whose descendants are jugged for our secular pleasure by the English Folk Dance Society of to-day Those silent stones tell us how bitter and agonizing is the struggle of a new order to replace the old

It is interesting that so many long barrows were

once grouped in the vicinity of Silbury (as the mastabas were grouped about the royal pyramid in Egypt), for that is a further indication that Silbury was contemporary with the first megalithic phase. The five excavations of the mount since the eighteenth century disclosed the customary flints and deerhorn picks characteristic of both megalithic periods. The burial of a horse with a Celtic iron bit and bridle near the top of Silbury shows conclusively that the Celts, as they so often did, were using a traditionally holy grave site for their own dead, while the deflection of the Roman road to avoid this towering tumulus shows it to be pre-Roman. It must therefore have been raised by the Big Stone men, and its imposing size, together with its geographical-cum-symbolic relationship to Avebury and the long barrows suggests that the Wiltshire Downs knew Silbury long before they were hummocked with round barrows.

But there is another indirect clue to period in the once existence of a number of other and smaller cone barrows scattered over the megalithic counties and the majority of them long disappeared. The principal one is the great cone (60 feet high), known of old as Merlin's Mount and situated in the grounds of Marlborough College, also on the bank of the Kennet. The excavations revealed the same type of implement within both mausolea, and other similarities make it highly probable that the one was coeval with the other. Another famous one covered a dolmen of the same type as Kit's Coty House on the North Downs in Kent, and occurs in the lead mining area of Derbyshire. Authorities are uncertain whether its date was Megalithic I or very early Megalithic II. Yet another (Gib Hill Barrow, also in Derbyshire) is an annexe, connected by an earthen rampart to the stone circles of Arbor Lowe. As Arbor Lowe, as we have already described, is practically a miniature of Avebury, this is further and strong evidence of the integral rela-

tionship between Silbury and Avebury and so of their contemporaneity. The earthen rampart, connecting little pyramid with little temple in Derbyshire, is plainly a substitute for the stone avenue of Avebury. The numerous and handsome funerary deposits in Gib Hill Barrow, again, are either late Megalithic I or early Megalithic II.

It is hardly surprising, with these examples before us, that Colt Hoare described Avebury as 'the work of a whole nation.' Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the interlinkage between the industrial districts of the limestone and the agricultural and residential ones of the Downs. The other cone barrows, still existing or recorded, were all unmistakably Megalithic II, a remarkable affidavit in itself to the continuity prevailing between the two periods, in spite of the racial divergence between longhead and roundhead. The dispersion of these cone barrows through various counties entitles us to consider them as inspired by Silbury, the greatest and the earliest of them. No serious student could contend that the monuments of Derbyshire preceded those of Avebury, or that Silbury was evolved from Gib Hill Barrow. The parent pyramid of all the cone-barrows was, therefore, great Silbury.

### III—THE HIGH PLACES AND RITES OF THE DEAD

A strong illumination upon the relationship between the three eras of pre-Roman Britain—I am excluding for convenience the traces of pre-megalithic culture in this country—are the two methods of disposing of the dead. The invariable practice of the Iberians was the inhumation of the dead, whereas in the round barrows the conventions both of inhumation and cremation were followed. It becomes important, therefore, to determine the date when the rite of burning

the dead was introduced into England. According to the British Museum authorities, cremation and the crematory urn in which the ashes were deposited did not appear in England before 1000 B.C. This is a very valuable index to a differentiation of periods, and so to the study of English civilization as a whole previous to our absorption in the Roman Empire. If cremation was unknown in Britain before 1000 B.C., its replacement of the older burial custom exactly coincides with that of the megalithic culture by the Celtic. Now, though cremation is, in fact, a direct contradiction of inhumation, there is some ground for believing that it grew out of its predecessor. Otherwise it would indeed be difficult to explain why offerings were still deposited with the burnt body as they had been with the buried, if there were not a linkage of theory between the two rituals. The provision of food, amulets, and other accompaniments of the after-life survived in a practice which denied all logic and meaning to it. The inference, therefore, is that the Celts inherited from the megalithic peoples they conquered and enthralled vestigial relics of culture which had lost their original significance and applicability. We shall see in the next chapter that this is a just inference.

On the other hand, the probability that both the megalithic peoples who preceded the Celtic tribes in Britain practised inhumation is further warranty of their cultural interdependence. But there is a distinction between the forms of burial in each phase of the megalithic culture which merits much stronger attention than it has received. In certain long barrows of Wiltshire, the Cotswolds, and Yorkshire, the bodies showed signs of a kind of ritual breaking of the bones, and of a removal of them after death to another place of sepulture before the remains were transferred to the barrows. In the process of transference the skeletons were refitted with a decidedly amateurish

knowledge of correct anatomical adjustment Canon Greenwell (*British Barrows*) was more intrigued by these mystery burials than his fellow workers of a later date have allowed themselves to be, and propounded a very ingenious theory as to the reason for this apparent maltreatment of the bones. The bodies were not cremated because the calcining of the bones was only partial, and they were, besides, primary Iberian interments. Neither were the remains the debris of cannibal feasts, partly because of the refitting and partly because the fractures were "the result of pressure upon bones which had undergone, whilst covered up, the action of fire." There was no evidence of any violent manhandling of the bodies. Therefore this careful authority conjectured that the bodies "may previously have been kept in another place of deposit, where they were smoked and also very possibly had the flesh removed."

Now, if we turn to other parts of the world, especially the Far East, we are acquainted with the fact that this very process was followed with variations among peoples who practised a crude form of mummification. In Torres Strait, for instance, an unintelligent imitation of the peculiar embalming technique of the Twenty-First Dynasty in Egypt was carried out by Islanders who copied the details without understanding their *raison d'être* and in a climate particularly unfavourable to the preservation of the body. In other places, smoking, skin removal, refitting the skeletal parts and withdrawal of the body for a long or short period in native houses before final burial were, in many cases up to quite recently, a familiar procedure in the cult of the dead. The suggestion that these Iberian skeletons of our long barrows may have been treated in the same manner, particularly in a civilization whose psychology was the direct opposite of Blake's "drive your plough over the bones of the dead," acquires added force from the fact that



three bodies have been found in one of the rock cut tombs of Iberia which have been described as 'almost mummified' If our megalithic culture did indeed come originally from the Eastern Mediterranean, we have the certain information that the high dead of Mycenæ as well as of Egypt were embalmed in the shaft graves, while the Cretans placed models of mummies in their rock cut tombs Our conjecture does at least provide an alternative explanation for the condition of these so quaintly disposed bodies in certain long barrows, other than the crude one of cannibalism and the untenable one of cremation The reader has to consider whether a degeneration of a very complicated technique in a distant land fits the facts

We will end this chapter with a brief survey of the distribution of the long barrows, to the extent that we have failed to deal with it in the previous chapter on mining Round barrows, being much more abundant than long, and more haphazardly and carelessly grouped, do not offer such facilities for inference

One thing that will immediately strike the long barrow hunter, especially on the Downs, is the amazing eye for landscape, for perspective, for scenario, for tomb planning possessed by these ancient sextons of our first civilization The long barrow, with its straight back, its fuller eastern end, and its peculiar appearance of something crouching, is in itself beautifully appropriate to the linear harmonies of Downland, more so than the round barrow, which is a pleasantly humpy excrescence rather than a rhythm And nearly all the Downland long barrows are so posed that you can see them as well as they can see you It almost seems as though they were raised for the ostensible purpose of the living keeping them in perpetual memorial and of the dead within them finding a repose and benediction in the sweeping lines and curves, the coloured designs of tossing trees and

dappled fields, which should console them for an immortality that was lonely, and for hearing as in a trance of remoteness the busy hum of their fellows in life. It is probable, at any rate, that the barrows were set up in the high places because of the commerce between sky and earth conceived in the religious beliefs of these far travelled men. The megalithic culture, as its settlements declare with an almost unanimous voice, revered, however prosaically, the godhead of the heights.

The interplay between chalk, granite, and limestone is brought strongly to our notice by the different styles of the long barrows on their respective soils. This may partly be due to the greater adaptability of materials on the chalk. But this cannot be the whole reason for the richer accomplishment of form in the Downland barrows, partly because the megalithic chambers of the Downland long barrows are usually finer, larger, and better finished, and partly because the long barrows of the industrial districts are so frequently shapeless and asymmetrical. Nearly all the larger long barrows, again, are situated on the chalk, while the majority of the industrial long barrows are chambered. But at Avebury, in the West Kennet Long Barrow, this form of Iberian grave reaches its apogee in style, in size, in elaboration, and in the careful architecture and impressiveness of its stone chamber, now broken up. This is still further evidence for Avebury as the brain and nerve-centre of the earlier megalithic England, and if we can look upon Derbyshire, Somerset, Cornwall, and other counties as the Manchester and Bradford of the megalithic era, it is fairly certain that the Downs were its hearth and home and shrine.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE THREE AGES

## I--THE GREAT CHANGE

STRICTLY speaking, there were of course not three but four main cultures in Britain which preceded the Roman occupation—the palæolithic, the first megalithic, the second megalithic, and the Celtic—while the first (which was of very long duration) and the last have been conveniently sub divided into periods illustrating their material characteristics. But for the purposes of this book, we shall not mislead the reader if we observe the three lines of strata in *civilized* Britain we have already laid down. These, as we have seen, do in effect merge into two, the megalithic and the Celtic, since the distinctions between Megalithic I and Megalithic II are secondary and in no sense radical. Let us devote this chapter to placing these temporal and cultural differentiations upon as broad, simple, but, at the same time, sharply defined a basis as we can.

A vast literature has been written round the subject of the relations between the late palæolithic and early megalithic cultures, in which the diversity of opinion is such that one's bearings are lost in obscurities, perplexities, and animosities. Was there a continuity between them? Was there a break? Did the one culture evolve into the other by the medium of a great lapse of time, or were the stations of the palæolithic hunters and fishers 'invaded' by a new "race," introducing a new mode of living? Was the change a revolutionary one, or did it mean little more than the discovery of grinding and polishing stone? Did the "reindeer" men of the Old Stone Age go north after the retreating herds, or were they exterminated by the newcomers, or did they mingle with them? Why were

some palæolithic stations deserted and others occupied in successive layers of Old Stone and New Stone Age deposits? And what æons of time crawled across the face of Western Europe between the displacement of the one culture by the other?

We think, however, that if the reader will keep his eye upon the object, as Wordsworth counselled, he will avoid falling into a frenzy of speculation. For there are a few elementary categories which hold firm in this impingement and confusion of cloudy worlds. We are pretty certain, that is to say, of what the one culture did perform and of what the other did not. Palæolithic man did not spin and weave, he had no use for metals, he did not cultivate the soil, he had not domesticated animals, he reared no tombs for notables, who did not exist, he attached no value to building in stone, he made no artificial dwellings, and, with the evidence before us of modern primitive tribes whose records have been collected, he possessed no division of classes or social organization, or formal authority, or ambition, or religious sanctions to rob, murder, exploit or enslave his fellows. So far as we can gather, organized warfare, as an absorbing occupation for men, did not seriously develop in Western Europe before the last millennium B.C., when the waves of Celtic invasion and intertribal conflict crumbled the stability of the megalithic period. Except, then, for the fact that "Neolithic" man was a colonist who came in peace, he had to his credit and discredit every one of the achievements we have mentioned as unknown to and undesired by palæolithic man. Even if we exclude metals which, as we have tried to show, there is no just reason to exclude, the distinction between the Old Stone Age and the New obviously goes far beyond what is indicated by this confusing nomenclature, and heavily underlines the verdict of the British Museum *Guide to the Antiquities of the Stone Age* that 'we suddenly find a different culture, and

different kinds of implements, all indicating a different way of life' The importance of this sentence lies in the 'suddenly' In the one province of time we find nothing of this organization, none of these arts and crafts, no trace of these civilized prepossessions in the next, there they all are

Some writers have made play with what they call the transitional cultures between the palæolithic and the megalithic time punctuations—the Tardenoisian, Azilian, and Maglemosian But, as Mr Gordon Childe has conclusively shown, this epipalæolithic period is in no sense a bridge or even a ford between Old Stone Age ignorance and New Stone Age knowledge It had lost the magnificent art of the Cave Dwellers, it had acquired certain geometrical symbols and had domesticated the dog But these elements do not serve as an introduction to civilization, they rather indicate a falling-off, a weakening in the capabilities and preoccupations of palæolithic man On the one hand, we are unable to detect any premonitory symptoms of, or tentative advances towards, a civilized existence in palæolithic man, on the other, there is no sign whatever of any experimental stage in the principal functions and industries of megalithic man in Western Europe He arrived there full fledged in his own peculiar arts of civilization The barrows and circles were set up as institutional fixtures and according to a routine of religious tradition, there was no preliminary novitiate in stonework, agriculture, sun cult, or burial rites Whatever this concealed background, it is certainly not to be found in the cultus of the troglodytes of Spain, France, and England, whom the ancient mariners discovered in some of their stations In the recent remarkable finds at Glozel, for instance, apparently Magdalenian (the concluding chapter of the Old Stone Age proper) carving was excavated in association with characteristic Minoan and "Neolithic" objects

But the cultural differentiations between palæolithic and megalithic are so abrupt, so primary and far reaching, that we are entitled to classify them as representing the cleavage between primitive and civilized man. We have to travel not below the ground but along it, from West to East as we have suggested, before the true paternity of the megalithic culture can be established. It is a very striking fact, one, too, that is not disputed, to whatever extent its significance has been missed, that it is only in ancient Egypt that any genuine continuity, any graduated transition between the primitive and the civilized (*viz.*, grain and metal using, stone building, etc.) community has been revealed. Before the second millennium B.C. England was inhabited by careless, peaceful child men, who fished and hunted in small groups in the Kentish, East Anglian, Derbyshire, Somerset, Devonian extensions of the larger palæolithic stations in France and Spain, whence they wandered, perhaps along the banks of the great rivers, over the *terra firma* of the English Channel. But after the second millennium B.C., came men in ships from lands already deep in knowledge of good and evil, the rulers and the ruled, and all woven into that strict web of thought and action which stretched from earth to heaven and from the living to the dead. It was these men who laid the foundation stones of the English nation, and it is their works we contemplate to this day among the green rollers of the Downs.

## II—THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MEGALITH BUILDERS

We have already spent so much time allusively travelling between the men of the round barrows and the long that there is no need to devote much more to stressing the cultural continuity between them. We

have given the evidence for their common derivation from two distinctive phases of high civilization in the Eastern Mediterranean. Both peoples settled in the same areas, both were workers in stone, flint, and earth, both, as we have maintained, were seekers after metals, and both were obsessed with the cult of the dead. Since it would be tedious to recapitulate the further resemblances between them, we are able to turn to the evidences of discontinuity, of which archæology has made the utmost, just as it has tended, in spite of violent contrary winds of opinion, to make the least of the hiatus between palæolithic and megalithic. But, discarding theory, there is only one primary division between Megalithic I and Megalithic II, and that lies in the shape of skull. The long barrow men were Mediterranean longheads and the round barrow were Alpine or Armenoid roundheads. If this were an unqualified fact, it would surely indicate the triviality of racial in comparison with cultural factors. Whether the heads of these two people were broad or long, the problem itself is as broad as it is long, for much the same kind of thought came out of them both. But the fact needs to be qualified, since, though no roundhead was buried in a long barrow, longheads have frequently been dug out of the round barrows, while other round barrow interments show an intermingling of cranial types. The same blending occurred in Crete and Mycenæ. Craniology cannot, therefore, exercise so dominant a voice in the reconstruction of the past as it has been too zealous to raise.

What then, we may ask, is the valid distinction between the two periods, the one that entitles us to write Megalithic II after Megalithic I, as we write Georgian after Victorian, Stuart after Tudor? A circular mound replacing a long one, a stone box a stone chamber, a Stonehenge an Avebury, is hardly any more discriminating than a "brachycephalic" head replacing a "dolichocephalic." Even the new

form of the Stonehenge "Trilithons" was not so very new when juxtaposed with the dolmen.

We cannot but believe that the real issue was a stylistic and psychological one, one probably embracing social and political conditions. If the ruder megalithic monuments of Western Europe do indeed represent a cultural degradation from the more refined and complex architecture of the Eastern Mediterranean, a similar process was at work as between the two ages of the megaliths. Stonehenge is plainly a more refined, more sophisticated temple than Avebury. Still more obviously is it a *lesser* structure, and that is true of all the characteristic monuments of the second epoch in comparison with those of the first. The roundheads were not such liberal and large minded builders as the longheads. Their eye for style was not so generous, their concepts were meaner, their labours less exacting, and their outlook on life was, it is not too fanciful to suggest, more cramped. They knew more about things, no doubt, but they subscribed less to the great canon of Blake's that "exuberance is beauty" than their predecessors, the founders of English civilization. Be that as it may, this is the impression their works convey. Lord Olivier, in a letter to *The Times* of September last, has justly pointed out the error we are all too liable to make in judging a civilization by its implements. We are not justified in assuming that one civilization is more advanced than its predecessor, simply because its tools are less crude and its mechanical knowledge is greater. For, by such standards, the mechanic of to day is more "advanced" than Archimedes.

We cannot, of course, be dogmatically certain that the round barrow men did not invade and dispossess the great builders of Avebury, Silbury, and the long barrows. The reader may, if he will, explain the great earthworks as defences of secondary importance, constructed by the new roundheaded overlords of Britain.



against revolt on the part of their disinherited brethren in culture. But a close comparative scrutiny of the succession of Megalithic II to Megalithic I cannot but ratify the considered judgment of Professor M. Kerry that 'there is no proof of any break or gap or cataclysm but only of continuous changes. If those changes were originally accomplished by violence, conflict must have been sporadic and casual, a tea-cup warfare compared with the organized military raids and the consequent idealization of the warrior for which the Celtic plunderers were responsible. All we can definitely say is that warfare between Neolithic and Celtic times was a slowly cumulative development, and that the Broadheads occupy a transitional place in the growth of warlike habits between the Neolithic religionist and the Celtic battle hero. What Pennington (*Barrows and Bone Caves of Derbyshire*) remarked so wisely of his particular county—'In Derbyshire, no such wave of destruction seems to have swept over the land. No traces of any break between the Neolithic and Bronze times occur, and, if it did occur, we must suppose that both conquerors and conquered were of similar races, possessing similar customs'—applies with equal validity to the rest of megalithic England. A consultation of the Devizes Museum *Catalogue of Wiltshire Antiquities* apart from all other evidences, reveals a paucity of genuine weapons of war, in comparison with those of the Celtic period, which should be a chastening corrective to writers who are too prone to reconstitute prehistory upon a quaking foundation of military generalizations.

No such doubt confronts us when we run on to the Celtic period of the late "Bronze Age" and early Iron Age in the last millennium B.C. These men were swift-moving warriors, and they broke up the megalithic civilization of Britain, as their kinsmen did that of Spain and Minoan Crete.

## III —THE CELTIC DECADENCE

The reader may complain that he has heard little enough of the Celtic dominion of our country in a book which professes to survey pre Roman Britain. The reason is that the significance of the Celtic impression upon Britain is trifling when compared with that of the megalithic. The Celts were deficient in constructive works, not because they were less intelligent than their predecessors, but for the very simple reason that their energies were diverted into a different channel. Their mission was primarily a destructive one, and we observe in consequence a far steeper decline in cultural achievement than is apparent as between the first and second megalithic eras. Stone working fell into desuetude, the Celtic crematory urn is much coarser and of more careless workmanship than the "Beaker" is, while the Celtic barrow is not only far less abundant than the round barrow of the earlier period but hardly ever more than a mere dwarfed mound. Their system of cultivation was mean and sparsely distributed in comparison with the patient labour of the terraces.

So much is a commonplace of historical research, though the assumption that each successive phase of culture registers a more progressive evolution of civilized life stultifies the conclusions that are to be drawn from the cultural actualities of the Iron Age in Britain. The Celts were undoubtedly more proficient in the *use* of metals than were their precursors, they extended the employment of iron from an ornamental to an industrial and military service, and they developed such crafts as enamels and others. But they were not miners like the Iberians and Roundheads, while in every other respect their civilization betrays a relapse into barbarism, and the visible traces of their occupation are abruptly less imposing and less

abundant than those of the megalithic peoples. Their achievements were principally within the sphere of arms, and it is to them that the evolution of the bronze leaf shaped sword from the bronze dagger was due. The reasons for this pronounced decadence of culture must surely be sought in the changing social and political conditions of the times, and the development of warfare must unquestionably have exercised a direct influence upon these manifestations of cultural losses. Once again we are impressed with the predominance of cultural over racial factors in the sequences of historical phenomena. We have, therefore, to inquire into the conditions of the relationship, if any, between the Celtic culture and that of the megalithic civilization it dispossessed.

It is usually assumed that no such relationship existed, and the notion that the Celts were hardy and isolated warriors of the wilds, who came down like wolves upon the enervated settlements of civilization, prevails in most primers and history books. But as soon as we come to examine the actual data, we are forced to revise this superficial summary. It becomes manifest that a definite relationship between the Celtic and megalithic cultures did exist, and the evidences of it are so pervasive, that such cultural continuity cannot have been solely the effect of contact between conquerors and conquered. In other words, the development of the Celtic phase must have been implicit in the megalithic civilization itself, in its institutions, its social conditions, its general cultural "ethos". The last era of pre-Roman Britain grew into logical maturity out of the ones that preceded it.

What, then, was the nature of this relationship? We can only tackle this vital question by examining the cultural phenomena of Celtic Britain from two aspects—material and mythological. Let us begin with the first. We know that the Celts built barrows and deposited funerary gifts in them even though cremation

was the new convention they followed. Barrows with Iron Age interments are, to quote J. R. Mortimer, 'very small compared with the barrows of the stone and bronze periods.' A decline in the scale of building, that is to say, corresponded with similar methods and customs of burial together with the introduction of something new—the practice of burning the dead. A phenomenon still more speaking is the ample evidence that the Celts made use of the barrows raised during the megalithic occupation for burials of their own dead. We have already mentioned the example of Silbury, and there are very numerous others. We can only conclude from them that the Celtic tribes inherited the cult of the dead peculiar to the men of the megaliths, without lavishing upon it anything like the same constructive energy. Goidels, Brythons, and Belgæ, they too were hill-dwellers, and, as we can tell both by nomenclature and excavation, inhabited or garrisoned the ancient earthworks, building trivial rectangular ones of their own. The Celtic veneration for stone circles, again, is a platitude of early history, and these churches for rite and ceremony and human sacrifice and traditional superstition became theirs in every sense but that of the building of them. These and other elements of social custom surely reveal an intimate dependence of the late culture upon the earlier.

But it is when we come to study the tangled and devil-ridden mythology of the barbaric Celts that the lines of heritage become still more manifest. The Irish records display the exploits of 'sun heroes' whose solar prerogatives are obviously derived from the *vestiges* of the archaic sun-cult. But in time these vestiges disappear, and the sun gradually sinks below the horizon of the religious firmament. The same tale of the dispossession of a sun cult by a war cult is repeated in the Near East, in Polynesia and Melanesia, in pre-Colombian America, and other parts of the world, and always the solar cult leaves a kind of

academic legacy of rite, symbol, and magical observance, which is finally lost in the gathering clouds of the new war cult. What Professor Rhys calls the Celtic cult of terror' (*Lectures on Celtic Heathendom*), with its saturation of demonism and black magic, so swarms with survivals of megalithic beliefs that we have strong ground for concluding that the old deities and translated culture heroes' had undergone a transformation into ogres, goblins, and devils. The Fomorians of Ireland, for instance, whose kinship with the megaliths is extremely close and who are repeatedly assumed in myth and legend to be the pre-Celtic colonists of Ireland, became 'demon bringers of pestilence, gods of monstrosity, death and night and storm' (Mrs Greene, *History of the Irish State to 1014*)

If, again, we investigate the network of beliefs characteristic of the megalithic cult in various parts of the world, we find a vast number of them reappearing in this new Celtic world of survivals and vestigial relics. Among them are dragon and giant lore, the supernatural powers of the Great Mother Goddess (who became a series of hags and witches associated with megalithic monuments), the Mother Pot symbolism which apparently became degraded into that of the witches' caldron, human sacrifice, which, so the evidence runs, became greatly intensified in the Celtic period, the serpent cult, the story of the Flood and the Destruction of Mankind, the particular superstitions attaching to stones, trees, and water, the magical value clinging to gold, pearls, other precious stones, and certain plants, the search for the Earthly Paradise, and, perhaps most significant of all, the survival of the dead by ritual procedure and through "life-giving" substances. The "talking head of Bran," for instance, famous in Gaelic legend, carries us back to mummification, in which the preservation of the head played so important a part.

These evidences are so numerous and multiform, and illustrate so pronounced a degree of parasitism upon the older cultures, that the most cautious estimate is justified in seeking for an explanation beyond the results of an intermingling of idea, custom, and faith between a broken civilization and its barbarian overlords. The Celts lost certain elements of megalithic culture and retained others in a garbled, traditional, and moribund form, while for themselves they originated nothing of marked cultural novelty. Were, then, what we roughly call the 'Celts' themselves descended from the megalith builders as military aristocracies who broke away from the parent civilization owing to disturbed social conditions, migrated into the wilds, built up new dynasties or chieftainships, and, finally, returned to overwhelm the culture that had given them birth? Continental parallels certainly lead us to believe it. Such an explanation is at any rate a working hypothesis for phenomena that cannot be adequately accounted for by alternative means. And whether we accept it or not, of one conclusion there can be no real doubt. The Celtic invasions punctuate a steep degeneration of culture from that reached by the megalithic civilization, particularly in its first phase.

We are thus witness of an advance in the use of metals, corresponding with a decline in cultural achievement and probably also in the humanities, stretching from the first coming of the megalith builders to the close of the last millennium B.C. Make what we will of it—and it opens up many new avenues of thought—this, in brief outline, is a story of pre-Roman Britain which does not conflict with the flotsam and jetsam of material that has come down to us.

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